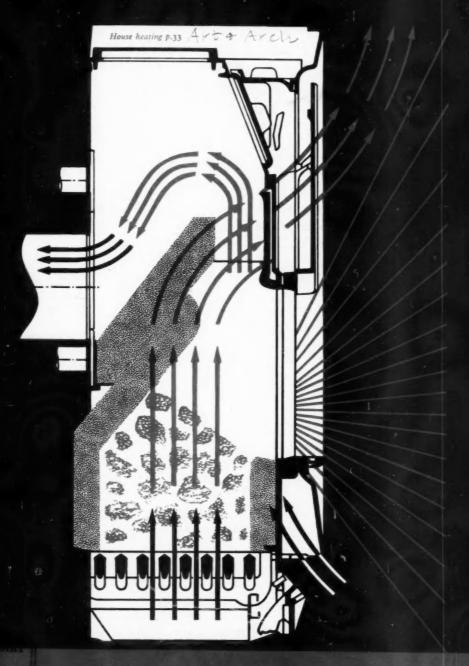
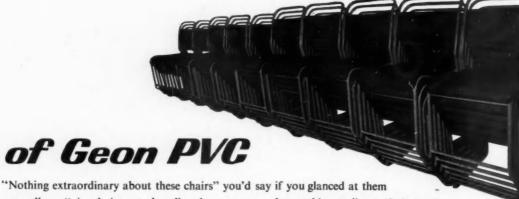
## Design



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## NUMBER 73 JANUARY 1955

#### Contents

POINTERS FROM TRADE ASSOCIATIONS 8

NEW HEART FOR A TRADE FEDERATION
Wyndham Goodden 9

CATERING FOR COOKS
John Gray 15

A NEW APPROACH TO MOQUETTE E. W. F. Gilboy 20

BRIGHTER WAITING-ROOM 24

HEAT-TREATMENT FURNACES

David L. King 25

LIGHT FITTINGS ON PAPER 28

J. Noel White 30

THE PLACE OF THE FIRE

J. Beresford-Evans 33

TWO NEW ESTATE CARS
E. G. M. Wilkes 41

USA 42 France 43 Sweden 44 Holland 45 Japan 46

NEWS 47 LETTERS 50

BOOKS 53

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## Design

## The problem of decoration

Nothing is more exasperating than a phrase that is on the tip of the tongue and will not quite come out. The language of decoration has been in this thwarted condition for nearly a generation, despite important attempts to say something which is understood today. *Art nouveau* had an inconclusive skirmish with the problem of machinemade ornament, and there followed some modernistic mannerisms which still find an echo in old catalogues. The emphasis on function during those years cleared away the clutter of irrelevant ornament behind which clumsy shapes and bad workmanship were sheltering. This improvement in the basic shapes around us, whether they are lamp-posts or chairs, is a valuable achievement, and has reopened the possibility of decoration which enhances and supplements a good shape rather than camouflages a bad one.

But a language of decoration which expressed the spirit of our own time proved elusive, although certain classic designs persisted and provided a valuable link with the old without dropping into meaningless clichés. At the same time colour was dwindling; black and orange in the 'twenties, tapering through pastel shades to the off-whites of the 'thirties, provided plain backgrounds rather than articulate decoration.

Now there are signs that eloquence in decoration is returning at last. Textiles and wallpapers perhaps speak most fluently; their tones are rich and the pattern highly decorative in a new and lively way. A similar trend has brought appropriate motifs of modern decoration to some tableware and floor coverings, and it has even pervaded certain surfaces of furniture and light fittings. Rich colours abound.

In houses and showrooms, even in offices and canteens, the new idiom of graceful decoration is palpably the child of our own tradition, and it is understood by a generation to whom the gracious living of the Edwardians is as remote as the horse-drawn bus. The fresh growth now justifies the drastic pruning.

This success, to which the public has so obviously warmed, has been mainly two-dimensional, and there is some sense in concentrating on fine shapes for solid objects which can be shown to advantage against surfaces of flat decoration. Nevertheless, machine-made decoration in the round remains a tantalising problem as yet without a solution. But it is an aim to which the Council of Industrial Design is entirely sympathetic, at the same time recognising that there are many objects from pins to propellers which are so essentially right in themselves that added decoration would only detract from them.

The successors of those who cut away so much inept ornament and established many forms that are basically satisfactory are now faced with the even more difficult task of assimilating suitable decoration into these shapes. Under pressure from nostalgic critics who are unaware of what is going on, the temptation will be to force the pace, to borrow from the past and double back on tradition rather than build on to it. Both designers and makers will need encouragement from every quarter if a modern language of decoration is to flourish.

#### **POINTERS**

#### from Trade Associations

- I MAN-MADE FIBRES FEDERATION Still perhaps the most impressive of new interiors for trade association headquarters is the scheme for the Man-Made Fibres Federation at Hamilton House, Piccadilly. These interiors were redesigned two years ago by Professor R. D. Russell to bring out the quality of a great London house adapted for a new use. Crimson and yellow Broomhall damasks, from the Courtaulds-Sanderson Collection of Ancestral Fabrics, and fine Chippendale mirrors give an effect of scale and grandeur in the exhibition room, while, in complete contrast, the penthouse clubroom, shown here, has the austere simplicity of modern Danish design.
- 2 COTTON BOARD Redesigned a little over a year ago by Robert and Roger Nicholson, the Cotton Board Colour, Design and Style Centre was established as an oasis of modern design in a region often criticised in the past for the conventional styles of its cotton products. Not only fabrics are exhibited at the Centre; paintings, sculpture, books, prints and many other expressions of contemporary thought, which may have a beneficial effect on design trends in cotton, are displayed. The illustration shows the new staircase and mezzanine with, behind, a blown-up eighteenth-century map of Manchester and Salford.
- BRITISH INDUSTRIES FAIR LTD The newly formed British Industries Fair Ltd has given a strong lead to British industry generally in making clear its attitude towards modern interior design. Though a severely limited budget was available, the company commissioned Dennis Lennon to design the interiors of its new offices at Ingersoll House, Kingsway. Shown here is the reception hall with specially designed desk and settee, and a colour scheme in which black, white and red predominate.
- 4 DRAPERS' CHAMBER OF TRADE Recently converted from an existing building in Harley Street are the new headquarters of the Drapers' Chamber of Trade with decorations and furnishings by Misha Black and Ellis Miles of Design Research Unit. While by no means creating a landmark in design, these interiors reflect a taste for simple but dramatic arrangements which are becoming increasingly accepted in widely differing spheres of activity. Shown here is the reception hall with its whimsically inviting banquette designed by Misha Black in conjunction with Ernest Race.











## New heart for a trade federation

Wyndham Goodden





The wall-lights on the left, with pattern engraved through a scarlet flashing, were made for the designers by Hailwood and Ackroyd. The red carpet of the staircase can be seen beyond.

The appointment and decoration of 19 Portland Place as the headquarters of the Glass Manufacturers' Federation in London is such a triumph that it is difficult to award responsibility in the right proportion, as between the subcommittee of the Federation which first approached the Royal College of Art, the Royal College of Art which invited Margaret Casson to prepare a scheme, and Lady Casson herself as head of a team of College staff and students whose tender was finally accepted. Lady Casson must accept the lion's share, since the conception and execution are hers: but the various decisions which led up to her appointment were hardly less inspired. In a big joint enterprise of this kind, one can usually tell where a designer has been handicapped by a reluctant or unsympathetic committee, by too many masters or too tight a purse – a fine idea perhaps low-lighted with compromise and disappointment: but in this case the touch is so sure, the money so well-spent, the scheme so satisfying from the boldest to the subtlest detail that, whatever other difficulties the designers had to face, lack of confidence cannot have been amongst them. Perhaps then it is, after all, to the Glass Manufacturers' Federation that the chief credit must go.

Nineteen Portland Place is a late eighteenth-century house without, hitherto, any special character of its own, but light and spacious, with a pleasant daylit staircase and some fine plaster ceilings in the first-floor rooms. The vaulted basement houses a permanent exhibition 'The Story of Glass', designed by



The notice-board clock was specially designed by Geoffrey Baxter of the Department of Industrial Glass, Royal College of Art. The notice-board itself was made for the designers by David Esdaile.

Green and black wallpaper in the hall by Walter Hoyle from Coles.

An occasional table in the hall by Lady Casson and Malcolm Goulding of heavy translucent glass, ebonised beech and brass. The glass top is mounted on rubber cushions. Made for the designers by F. E. Ward.



Lionel Rider and Cyril Weeden. This does not, by intention, form an integral part of the main floor decoration and will, therefore, be dealt with later in this article. Sufficient here to say that it is a good, indeed a lavish, use of a basement of this character.

The first thing one notices on approaching No 19 are the twin glass handles of the outer door. Of flint and deep blue glass, designed by Gillian Crowther of the Royal College, the handles make a brilliant use of the technique familiar to us all in nineteenth-century paper-weights. Inside the building one is immediately struck by the expertise described above. It is a great relief to the critic to be able to give quietus to his professional eye and simply enjoy a piece of work superbly done.

To enjoy it is one thing however; to describe it, so that readers who may never see it will enjoy it too, quite another. In the first place all these photographs should be in colour. There was never a redder red carpet rolled out for VIP's than this one flagging the tall white staircase. One first sees it from the entrance hall, with its greenish Walter Hoyle paper and scarlet wall-lights, Race chairs, a splendid table in glass and brass by Lady Casson and Malcolm Goulding of the Royal College, its floor of whitish marbled composition inset with harlequin diamonds of black. One sees it through the plate-glass screen which divides the hall and reception office from the house proper. The effect is not uncommon, but it has rarely been done better. What will make it uncommon will be a contemporary chandelier hung from the stairwell lantern, to be designed by Professor R. Y. Goodden and his Department of Industrial Glass at the Royal College.

In the conference room, indeed in both the conference rooms great and small, on the first floor, hangs what I take to be the most controversial feature of the building. Above and following the lines of a splendid sectional table designed by Lady Casson and Malcolm Goulding, and made by Martins of Cheltenham, hangs a really remarkable achievement by the same designers in the creation of a modern electrolier. Different as it is both in technique and function, it reminded me, more than anything else, of the sense of style, the panache and whole-heartedness of the great inventions lighting the Brighton Pavilion. Take a conventional billiard-table fixture, designed to give a smooth light over the smooth green cloth, raise this to godlike proportions, throw in the subtlest echoes of boatbuilding, whalebone, Chinese furniture and West African marimbas, thrust the whole into a weddingcake plaster ceiling of lace-like delicacy and . . . Well, one effect beyond doubt is to make it clear that Adam,



Reception room with furniture by Robin Day for Hille, and A.J. Milne for E. Horace Holme. The curtains are by Betty Middleton at the Royal College.

One of the small committee rooms. Furniture by Heal's. Raspberry Victorian wallpaper by Coles.





and so-called Adam, ceilings are not so very important after all. There are hundreds, I suppose thousands, of them: and if this one has had a few small holes drilled into it to take the brass supports (which, by the way, could surely have been lighter?) of this twentieth-century solution, nothing is easier than for future generations to decide which part they value more and to restore one or the other, or – like all the best additions to the best inheritances – both. It is interesting and surprising, too, to find that the handsome modern wallpaper used with fine effect in both these rooms is, in fact, from the original blocks of William Morris.

Were it not for the photographs alongside, this verbal key to visual mysteries would read like a parody or, at worst, a deliberate devaluation of Lady Casson's silver touch. But the strength of her design lies precisely in this cool assurance, simple forms sparingly used to give effects of the most satisfying richness and complexity. The only detail which seemed less than thoughtful to this reviewer was the plain wood pelmet to the otherwise splendid curtains designed by James Lacey at the Royal College. The bold conjunction of twentieth-century lighting and eighteenth-century ceiling is one thing: the rather graceless pelmet board so near to the same ceiling struck me as not the happiest solution.

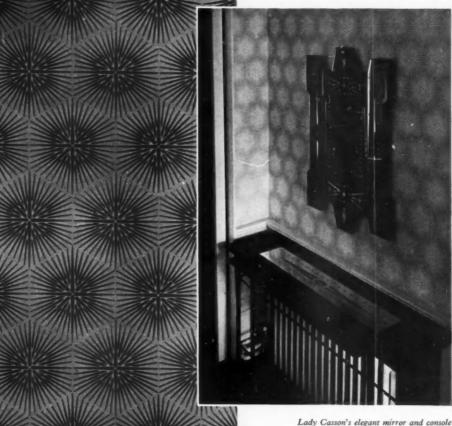
I have left myself little space to do justice to the many minor rooms containing important selections and designs of furniture, textiles and so on, writingrooms, library, withdrawing-room, etc. The conference room has Milne-Holme chairs specially covered

0

The magnificent electrolier by Lady Casson and Malcolm Goulding of the Royal College of Art. The same designers are responsible for the sectional conference table in mahogany and ebonised beech - whose general shape is echoed by the electrolier. The plaster ceiling can be seen above. Horace Holme chairs, upholstered in black leather, designed by A.J. Milne. Morris wallpaper from Sandersons. Curtains in citron, black, orange and olive-dun by James Lacey at the Royal College of Art.

A detail of the elegant brass feet and ebonised-beech legs of the conference table.





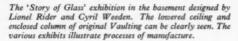
Lady Casson's elegant mirror and console table. The table was made by F. E. Ward with inset glass panel engraved by Robinson and King, who also made the mirror.

William Morris 'Star' wallpaper from Sandersons.



A detail from the electrolier. The bowls flashed periwinkle blue with the pattern engraved through the colour were designed and made by Geoffrey Baxter of the Royal College of Art.







A corner of Lady Casson's exhibition room on the ground floor. The left-hand showcase is fronted with woven glass but cannot be appreciated in silhouette.

in black leather. Particularly beautiful are the console tables designed by Lady Casson and made by F. E. Ward. The drawing-room has Day-Hille unit chair settees and sofa, and a particularly attractive woven haircord carpet made by the Carpet Manufacturing Company. Charming use is made of wallpapers by Crown, Cole and Sanderson in the various rooms - a fuchsia-pink Victorian paper by Cole in the library being offset by black and white wool curtains from Holland in horizontal stripes. On the ground floor is a display room designed to give the utmost flexibility for casual exhibitions, the shelving, lighting and background treatments being all variable at will. Colour here is kept to a minimum so that the colours of whatever is to be exhibited shall hold their full value. The exhibition cases are fronted with a cool woven strawgrass: a perfect use for this kind of material.

In the basement is the permanent exhibition already mentioned, 'The Story of Glass', designed by Lionel Rider and Cyril Weeden. It seems a pity that no use was made of the splendid given shapes of the original vaulting. Instead it has been covered with a false ceiling through which one sees the basic structure, painted black, like a dark night through flare-lit clouds. The columns of this vault are cased in an inverted pyramid, and thus become rather meaningless and bulky. As exhibition technique it is quite effective, and might more readily pass muster if it did not have to compete with the handling of the floors

immediately above it. Apart from this, however, the exhibition itself is very good indeed, fascinating to the casual visitor and satisfying to the expert, showing clearly and engagingly the chief processes, history and products of the industry as a whole. The circulation is excellent, and various industrial products are shown to great advantage as part of the display – a glass silk velarium, 'Spotlite' and 'Reeded' glass partitions, glass rod, glass tiles, and in the centre of Aladdin's Cave a great rough jewel of unworked metal. It is an exhibition of which the Federation must be deservedly proud, as of its new headquarters as a whole.

How vain is the hope, then, that some of this bravura will stem from the headquarters to the hindquarters of the industry? The Glass Manufacturers' Federation must now have quite the finest centre of any federation in the country; and it is fine precisely because of the boldness and trust with which it has employed the best available talent. But in spite of the claims of its own publicity, as anyone must know who has ever tried to select examples of British glass for prestige exhibitions at home or abroad, and in spite of a few praiseworthy exceptions, the standard of design in British table glass, however excellent technically, is not very high. Talent of the first quality, and highly trained, is readily available. But the United States, three thousand miles away, seems more aware of it, more ready to employ it, than some of our manufacturers at home.

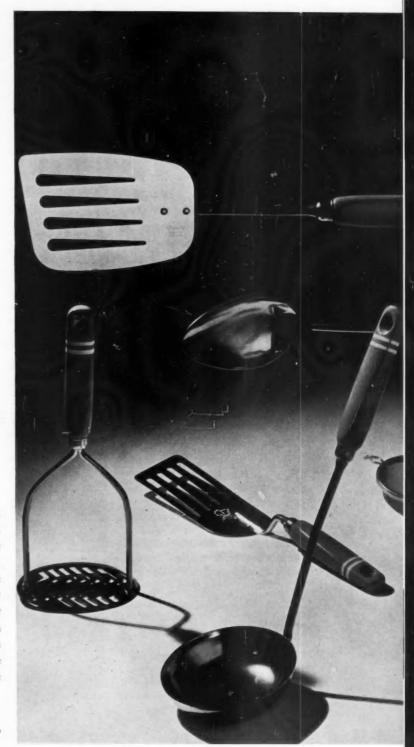
### **CATERING**

**FOR** 

**COOKS** 

John Gray

THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT that the 'Britain Can Make It' exhibition in 1946 scored its first and most permanent success in the kitchen. Showing mainly products of prewar design that were not at that time nationally known, it gave the newly emancipated housewife a foretaste of how post-war reconstruction might transform her workshop. Since then the kitchen has won a new status in society. Meals are taken in it by others than servants, there



A selection of SKYLINE tools made by Platers and Stampers Ltd.

being relatively few servants to establish a prior claim. For the same reason man has been obliged to join his wife at work-top, cooker and sink and so has taken a new and profitable interest in what household stores put on the market.

In the quick, uncertain design revolution that has followed, much is good and much not so good. The shapes of such units as cookers, cupboards and refrigerators have been simplified and made easier to clean and to live and work with. The citadel of green-and-cream has at last fallen – with few regrets. But remnants of the jazz age persist self-consciously in cupboard windows, toasters and cheese-dishes. And design leadership rests with far too few firms, who have the exciting but exacting task of keeping standards and thinking ahead.

#### Two ranges

The problem of designing kitchen tools is how to steer a progressive course between stale tradition and delusive gadgetry. No firm in Britain has tackled this problem more conscientiously than Platers and Stampers Ltd, working in close association with its American parent, the Ekco Products Company. Founded in 1937, it began production at its Burnley factory with a range of inexpensive kitchen ware, known widely as SKYLINE, which sells today at less than three shillings an item. SKYLINE tools quickly established a reputation for the quality of their materials and finish and for the efficiency (if not distinction) of their design at a time when trash appeared frequently and sold well.

After the war, with seven million women at work and domestic servants enjoying a sellers' market, Platers and Stampers introduced to this country a set of more expensive tools, which has sold under the name of PRESTIGE. Made of stainless steel with rosewood or plastic handles fixed by rivets, these tools are intended to last the best part of a lifetime and to give a standard of performance in kitchen ware never before attempted







of PRES pastelmoulde

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RIGHT Cook's knife; one of the large range of PRESTIGE hollow-ground cutlery. The pastel-cream plastic handle is slightly moulded to give a firm grip.

LEFT By contrast, an unsolved design problem in the SKYLINE range. The pre-war agg-beater, left, had a satisfactory appearance but the upright handle proved incontenient to many users. Its successor, centre, hat enjoyed a long vogue, but the manufacturer finds that the wire part of the grame lacks sufficient strength. Also, the grar-wheel common to both models is easily damaged. The new model, right, corrects both structural faults and gives higher speed n beating, but at the expense of appearance. The next step is to gain the best of both worlds.

RIGHT Set of six PRESTIGE tools in stainless steel with rosewood handles. Each tool is unpretentious and well constructed. The handles are fixed with nickel-silver rivets.

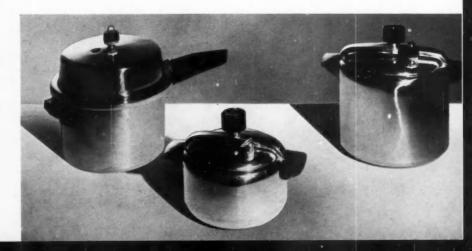
LEFT Fashion in fish-slices. LEFT to RIGHT pre-war; immediate post-war; today. All three are equally efficient, though the newest is perhaps a little more versatile and more interesting in appearance.

LEFT Design development in handles. LEFT to RIGHT The earliest pre-war model, ugly and not very comfortable to hold; a better shape, but one which many customers found hard to grip; a similar shape, flattened in an experimental way to meet customers' objections; the elegant and much more satisfactory handle of today, available in several colours and incorporating a hole for hanging on a rack.

RIGHT PRESTIGE pressure cookers exploit the obvious advantages of using pressed and not cast aluminium; they are extremely light and portable. Recent models incorporate a special safety valve, which is virtually foolproof. LEFT the 'Hi-dome' cooker designed for fruit-bottlers in particular. CENTRE a shallow version of the popular model, suitable for households of three or fewer persons. RIGHT the popular model, weighing only 5 lb empty.







in Britain. The range includes both kitchen and table cutlery, all hollow-ground. Its success has so established the habit of using specially designed kitchen knives that the company has recently decided to extend the practice to the cheaper SKYLINE range, whose tools are usually chromium-plated with the exception of the knives, which are now all made of stainless steel.

The vast majority of PRESTIGE and SKYLINE designs are American in origin and are made in the USA and Britain at the same time. The engineering department of the British company limits its designing function to the modification of ranges or of individual tools to suit conditions peculiar to the British market. Almost all the designs are strictly functional and they owe much of their commercial success to that fact. Even the highquality PRESTIGE ware has been designed chiefly for efficient and lasting use: its successful appearance results from wise choice and simple treatment of materials, solid (though not heavy) construction and reliance on plain shapes and patterns that will not date.

Concessions are occasionally made to personal appearance and even fashion plays more than a 'walk-on' part. One cannot help feeling that, now that the principle behind appearance design has gained acceptance in this way, it could be applied with pleasure and profit to many more kitchen implements than at present. Decoration, where legitimate, as for instance on the metal sides of sieves, could be more inspired – and some sternly functional shapes could be refined to give visual pleasure as well as physical satisfaction in use.

skyline tools were the first to incorporate new colours in handle finishes, deep red and pale blue being two in general use. Here is a field for imaginative advance, but not by one company acting alone. The need is for combined operations by firms making complementary equipment – cabinets, cookers, tools, chairs, etc – for the pooling of ideas and for agreement on colour ranges that all will produce. It should be possible to devise colour groupings that can be mixed in the smallest of kitchens without fear of clashes. Perhaps Platers and Stampers could give a lead here.



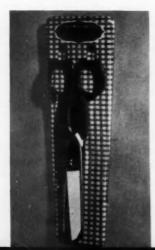
RIGHT The new IMPERIAL food mixer is a strong, lasting and good-looking machine, each part being carefully detailed and cleanly finished. Nylon plastic cogs have greatly lengthened the effective life of the mixer. These cogs can be seen in the 'exploded' view on the opposite page. On the LEFT is the companion egg-beater which has a frame of pressed steel. The cast successor, RIGHT, is stronger, though more expensive, and of more pleasant shape.

BELOW A good product and an ingenious idea for shop display and kitchen storage. But how much more interesting it would be if the trade mark were more aptly framed and set in uniform type and the printed pattern given a sharper outline. BELOW A small, efficient and cheap tool which has proved its worth on the market. As an implement it seems to defy improvement, but it would be interesting to see what an appearance designer could do with its shape, while maintaining the standard of its performance.

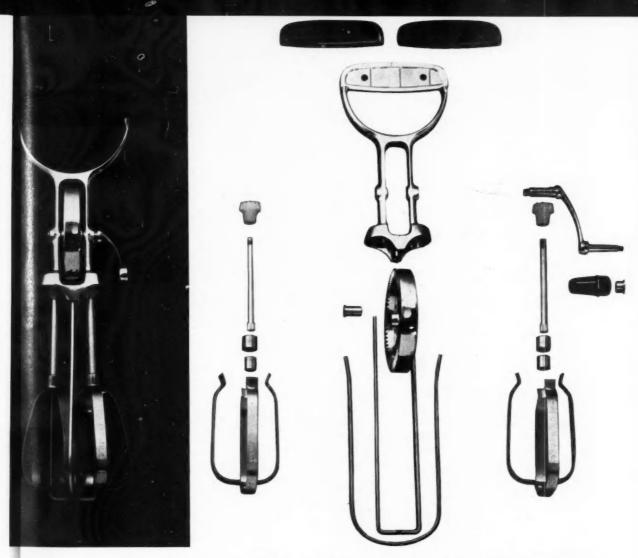
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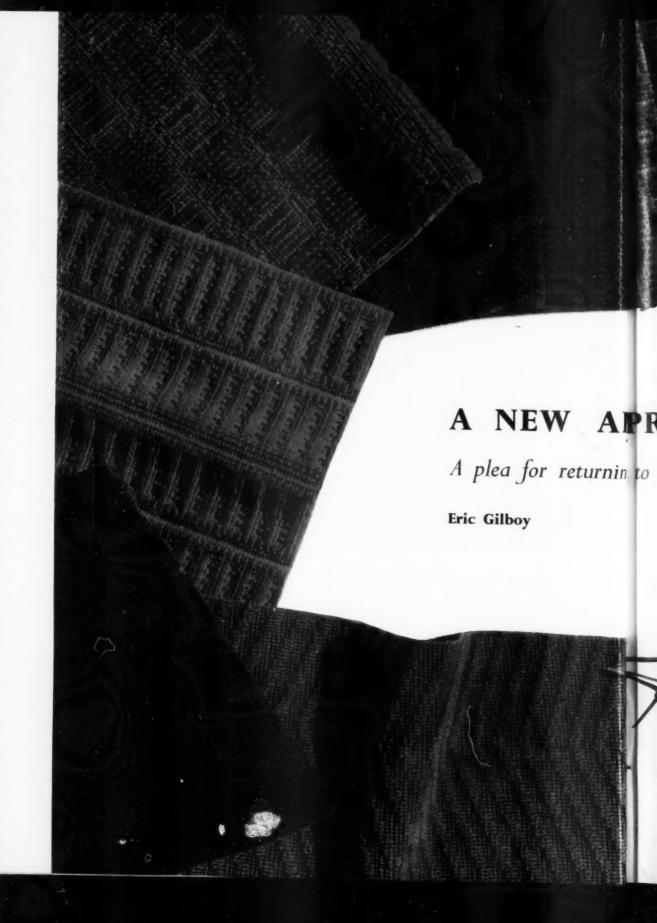


BELOW This safe, singing-kettle cannot scald the hand and can be easily opened for pouring by a trigger attached to the handle. Seeking to bring colour to the kitchen, the manifacturer has given the kettle an anodised finish in fruit-drop colours – not to everyone's taste, but an innovation all the same.

BELOW The firm is gradually evolving suitable forms of packaging and display for its diverse products, beginning with the PRESTIGE range. The box for steak and game knives and the storage-block for carving-knife and fork are two good examples (which have helped to make the products acceptable as gifts), though the latter is marred by a label on the box which is not equal to the design standard of the product. The container for the SKYLINE carving-set is the first outcome of a recent decision to improve the packaging of this range.









IT HAS OFTEN BEEN ASKED why manufacturers of moquette insist on producing the same old designs and colours and rarely attempt to break away from the imitation traditional. I use the term 'imitation traditional' because the constructional nature of moquette - its relatively coarse sett - forbids good reproduction of the rather elaborate and often finely drawn English traditional floral designs. It must be remembered that the large manufacturer is often three or four times removed from the actual consumer and although it can be argued that he is free to make what he likes, he must, because of the method of trading, study carefully the wishes of his customers. Moquette rarely reaches the actual consumer as a finished article. It is part of another article - a chair or settee - and because of this must to a degree conform to the upholsterer's ideas. In some cases the covering he chooses to stock may not be the best design for a particular chair.

Most manufacturers sell to the merchants, who in turn sell to the upholsterer, who then sells to the retailer. It would be a very brave man who tried to force his ideas on such a strong chain of distributors,

## APROACH TO MOQUETTE

nin to the basic characteristics of the moquette weave

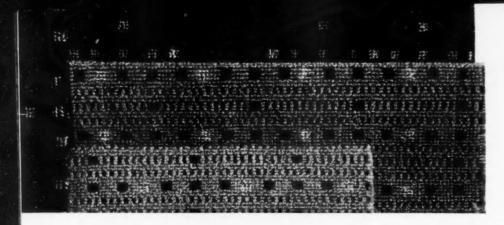
THE CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

THAT they shall not show dirt is obviously not the first onsideration of the Canadian National Railways in their choice of these moquettes. Clean colours in simple designs give a cheerful atmosphere, parts and fittings. It designs are not reserved for special coaches, but matched with equally cheerful carpetal coaches, but matched with earner of overs which are used form part of the range of covers which are used form part of the range of covers which are used form named maintenance work. The maquettes are herd-normal maintenance work and the magnetic state of pile, and can be re-dipped when required.

and although some merchants and upholsterers will co-operate with the manufacturer to produce something different, on the whole the merchant and maker-up have built up their business on a particular style of article (largely based on what they have been able to sell at a certain price) and are not going to risk their turnover falling in order to interest or educate the public in better or, at least, different designs.

In the United States the system would seem to be slightly different. The designer or stylist decides, with the help of considerable market research, just what the mill is going to manufacture for, say, the next six months. Everything then is geared up to the mass-production of that range. It is produced, backed by high-pressure publicity and the salesmen then have to sell it. It has its points. Delivery is immediate; price is reduced, and ideas that sometimes take years before they are accepted elsewhere are put over in North America in a matter of months.

Despite the chain of distributors on which the British manufacturer depends, it is only he who can make the attempt to break into a new field of moquette



#### OPEN STOCK

Originally designed for a manufacturer of modern furniture, this moquette still remains unsold. It is, however, a good example of a simple design showing the characteristics of worsted moquette to good advantage.

design. This can only be done if the characteristics peculiar to this cloth are developed. Moguette is relatively coarse; it is limited in the number of figuring colours; it has no special weave effect; weft cannot figure on the face, and the use of fancy yarns or yarns of cotton and artificial fibres tends to take away from what is probably its best quality - that of serviceability. Thus from the designer's viewpoint we are left with a very simple coarse cloth with only the pile to give it its characteristic texture. This inherent simplicity is no reason why attractive designs should not be produced. If the limitations are appreciated and the characteristics of the cloth fully exploited moquette will be comparable, in its own sphere, with the best modern designs in wallpapers, printed fabrics, tapestries, and so on, without attempting to copy them.

At least one British manufacturer has done this with a success that can be appreciated financially, apart from the satisfaction of having broken away from the accepted idea of moquette. As far as is

known at this early stage the merchants and makersup who co-operated with this new approach are doing equally well.

Another answer to the complaints against tiredlooking floral patterns is that the leading firms in the industry have for years produced for Scandinavian markets ranges which compete with all that is best in Swedish and Danish designs on tapestries, prints, and so on.

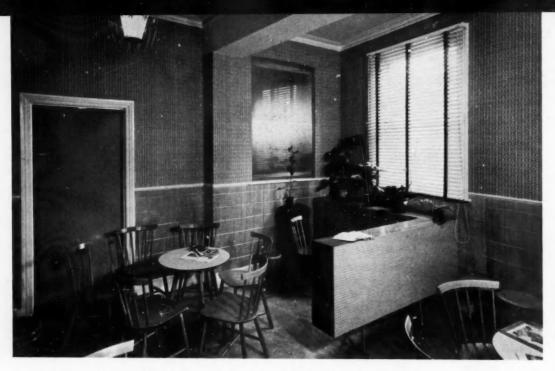
There is no lack of ingenuity on the part of some manufacturers to produce new and good designs, but an attempt to make merchants, upholsterers, retailers and the public alike suddenly give up the safety of the so-called traditional moquettes would be unwise and unpractical; manufacturers of wallpapers and prints would not think of throwing overboard all their good or bad traditional patterns in favour of entirely modern designs and colours. The process of evolution in design can be assisted if manufacturers, merchants and retailers will each year persist in introducing several relatively modern designs in their ranges.



#### FOR SCANDINAVIA

Piece-dyed worsted moquettes in two heights of pile. These designs, together with examples similar to others shown on this page, have sold for several years – and continue to sell – in Denmark, Sweden and Norway for the retail trade.





A doctor's waiting-room after redesign by Vivien Pilley. The filing-cabinet, previously perched in the corner (below), has been moved, the rest of the furniture replaced, and a pink CROWN paper designed by Roger Nicholson covers the top half of the wall.

### **Brighter waiting-room**

THE AVERAGE DOCTOR'S waiting-room is so gloomy that it can hardly have a good effect on the morale of the patients. One London doctor recently decided to refurnish his waiting-room, and commissioned Vivien Pilley to prepare designs. After scrapping the furniture, the contractors, W. S. Sharpin Ltd, achieved a brighter effect by painting the woodwork white, the doors blue, and by covering the top half of the wall with a CROWN wallpaper. They used Pinoleum, a straw-coloured material, for the lower half or dado, and replaced the floor covering with grey marbled linoleum. A Venetian blind was substituted for the gauze that had dangled unhappily across the window.

The filing cabinet, which had loomed darkly in the corner, was divided into two parts and raised from the ground on metal struts. Perforated hardboard in yellow was placed over the back, and the frame painted pale blue. Chairs from Finmar were next introduced, and although these are perhaps no more comfortable than the previous set, they have a crisper and cleaner finish. Beyond the chairs, below right, the doctor's old-style consulting-room is dimly visible.

ABOVE RIGHT The same room from the same angle before redesign. Note the drab chairs and the leather-bound horsehair settee.

RIGHT The lower half of the wall is covered with Pinoleum, made from natural reed bound together with white tape. Danish stools are by Fritz Hansens Eftst.





CASE HISTORY

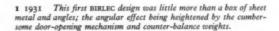
## Heat-treatment furnaces

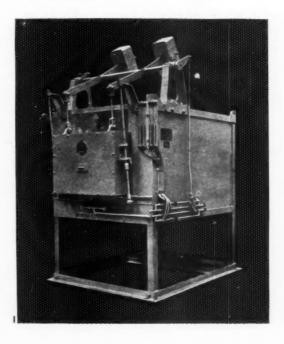
David I. King



HEAT-TREATMENT FURNACES are basic equipment in all industrial plants where metals are processed before being incorporated into the finished product. From the largest aircraft manufacturer down to the smallest toolmaking firm, these furnaces are regularly employed in such processes as the annealing, normalising, hardening, tempering, nitriding and carburising of metals. Essentially, they consist of a heated chamber of sufficient size to take the components being treated.

The first designs, 1, produced by Birlec Ltd in 1931, were virtually confined to that fundamental requirement. The furnace consisted of a rectangular box of sheet metal and angles, surmounted by the ponderous counterbalance weights used in opening and closing the furnace door. Although the furnace had to be supported at a certain distance above floor level in order to provide a convenient working-height, no attempt was made to utilise the vacant space thereby created. The transformer and other electrical accessories were accommodated separately. It was an obvious and logical step to incorporate these electrical accessories and this was done in the designs





introduced during the following year, 2; the electrical equipment being protected by panels of expanded metal.

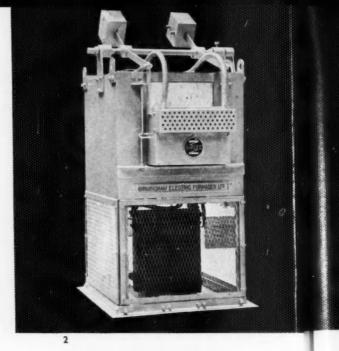
Further attention to the problem of suitably protecting the electrical equipment resulted in the replacement of expanded metal by a reinforced glass panel at the front of the furnace, 3. At the same time, the introduction of a folded metal casing extending right down to the floor level was beginning to give the furnace a more integrated appearance. The counterbalance weights were also changed from rectangular to cylindrical form, but this relatively minor alteration could do little to disguise the fact that attention to the design of the door and its operating gear had not kept pace with the other developments. This was still the case by 1948, when the glass panel was superseded by a louvred access panel; accessibility to the electrical equipment being further improved by the addition of similar panels on both sides, 4. In other respects, the external appearance of the furnace remained substantially as it had been eight years earlier.

#### Integrated design

The contrast between the contemporary model, 5, introduced in 1954, and its predecessor is for this reason the more striking and impressive. The door-operating gear has become totally enclosed within the furnace casing; the appearance of the casing itself being enhanced by a sloping front and amply rounded corners, and by an attractive paintwork finish instead of the former matt surface in either dull grey or aluminium. Access panels for the self-contained electrical equipment are still provided, but the frontal panel is of much more generous proportions, and all constitute an integral part of the design as a whole instead of being piecemeal attachments.

For the first time, the instruments for the automatic temperature-control equipment have been built on to the furnace in a separate steel-enclosed panel. This arrangement detracts from the balance of the furnace, though from the operational point of view convenience may be held to outweigh other criteria. In this connection, it is worth repeating that heat-treatment furnaces are fundamental items of equipment. Birlec Ltd pointed out that users would rather sacrifice good appearance than risk losing any operating convenience, accessibility, etc.

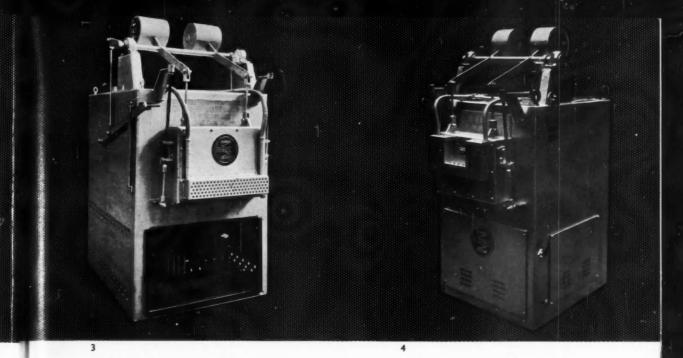
Another notable feature of this latest furnace, which, like its forerunners, was designed by the company's own staff without the aid of outside consultants, is the fact that it marks an important step in the direction of standardisation. The early models



2 1932 The electrical equipment was housed in the space below the furnace chamber and protected by expanded metal panels.

were designed and made to suit individual requirements; later, two basic types of furnace were evolved, both containing electric heating elements, but one being provided with an arrangement for introducing a protective 'curtain' of gas for applications where atmosphere control is essential. Now the current production model combines features of both these furnaces (though it can still be supplied either with door elements or with the protective gas 'curtain') in a design that meets the requirements of a very wide range of users, while the production economies of standardisation are reflected in price and delivery. The new furnace also incorporates operating improvements, among which may be mentioned the better provision for cleaning out the combustion chamber.

It is perhaps surprising, however, in view of the progressive design policy displayed over the past 25 years, that one of the most immediately observable details – the BIRLEC nameplate – should still preserve all its original characteristics unaltered. The jazzy appearance of this nameplate is especially out of harmony with the smooth and simple lines of the latest furnace: it could be redesigned with advantage.



3 1940 Introduction of a folded metal casing extending down to the floor level gives the furnace a more integrated appearance; the electrical accessories are now protected behind a reinforced glass screen. But the door-operating gear, despite the adoption of cylindrical counterbalance weights, still offers scope for improvement.

4 1948 Lowvred panels at the front and sides of this design improve accessibility to the electrical equipment; otherwise, the furnace shows little change.



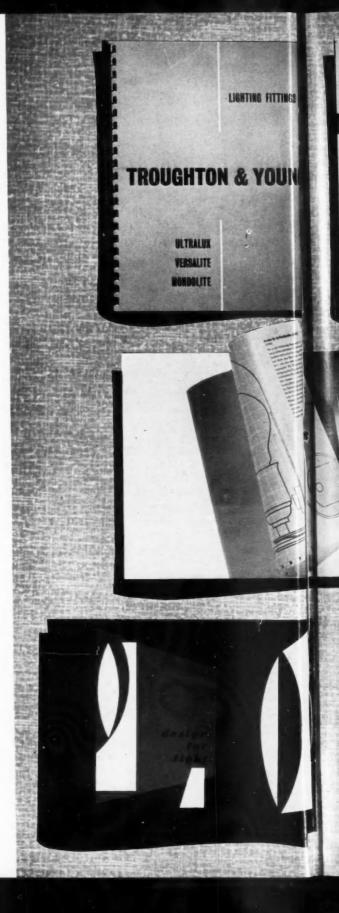
5 1954 Incorporation of the door-operating gear within a casing of improved design are the two features which do most to transform the appearance of the latest furnace in the BIRLEC range. An instrument panel is attached for the first time, giving increased operational convenience, though both panel and furnace casing, attractive in themselves, suggest that they were designed as separate entities.

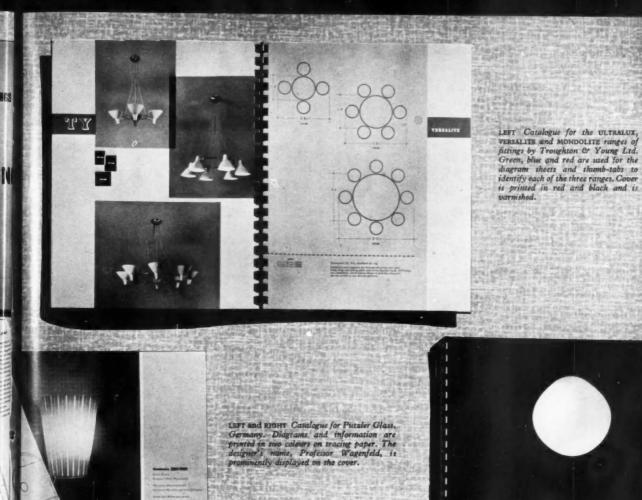
# Light fittings on paper

LIGHTING FITTINGS are among the most difficult of products to photograph. To shoot them when lit will often result in a picture of dramatic contrasts but which shows little of what the fitting is actually like. To shoot them unlit will reveal their form and structure but may give little idea of the effect produced when the light is turned on. Different fittings call for different treatments; sometimes a compromise is necessary.

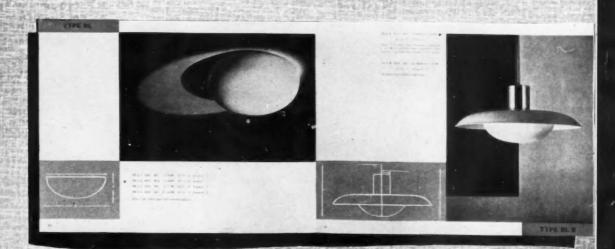
Much credit is therefore due to all those concerned in the production of two British and one German lighting fittings catalogues recently sent to DESIGN, in which the various approaches are demonstrated with results which could leave little to be desired. Troughton & Young has compromised, particularly on the fittings using metal shades; Putzler Glass favours the lighted fitting for its decorative glass shades; Heffer's white opal bowls are seen lit from an external source.

Though this often neglected aspect of catalogue production is valuable, it tells only part of the story. These catalogues show how information, clearly laid out in the form of diagrams and the printed word, can convey to the customer quickly and easily what he wants to know. Perhaps more important is the confidence inspired by these instances of the public face of the companies concerned. In this respect the symbolic pattern of lenses on the Heffer cover is powerful enough for the name to be unnecessary.



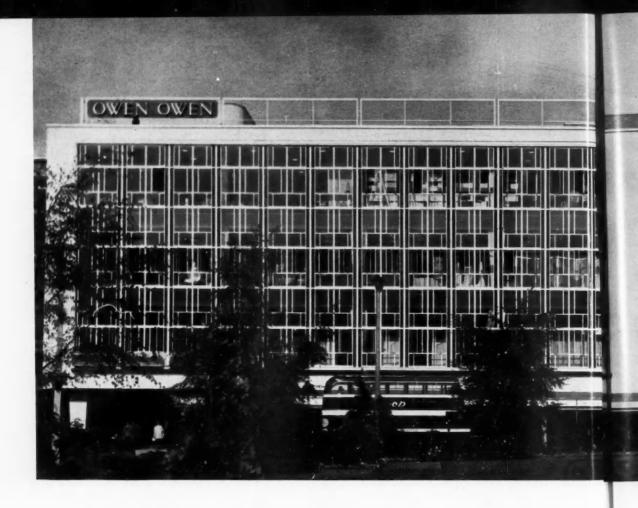


BBLOW Catalogue for Heffer & Co Ltd. Large photographs are generously spaced with diagrams printed in grey-green. The varnished cover is in black, blue and yellow.



leuchten aus putzler glas

Entworfen von Wagenfeld



## Lighting a modern store

#### J. Noel White

OWEN OWEN'S DEPARTMENT STORE in Coventry, which was destroyed by fire during the war, has risen from its ashes with fine new plumage. The new building by Rolf Hellberg and Maurice Harris has a vitality and modernity which are exciting even in a city as architecturally enlightened as Coventry. It lies on the north side of Broadgate, and looks across the square where Reid Dick's Godiva has stood stolidly since 1944.

In designing the building the architects have made the greatest use of natural daylight. The entire front of the sales-block facing Broadgate is a huge window whose surface is fretted with a highly decorative pattern of glazing bars; there is another great window which runs the full height of the building on the opposite side.





Owen Owen's, the Broadgate front.

Consequently there is a predominant impression of daylight and expanse on the principal sales-floors which stretch the whole depth of the building. This appearance of freedom is emphasised by the slab construction of this block, whose sole support is a series of mushroom columns. The artificial lighting, although essential, is subordinate to the natural light during the daytime and its design introduces a welcome element of decoration. It is, in fact, on the different treatments of the ceilings and their lighting that the variety between one floor and another depends.

As suitable light fittings for most of these schemes could not be obtained from standard lines, the architects collaborated with Lee Beesley and G E C to design special fittings for the store. The shape and colour of all the units, the colour and texture of the ceilings and the disposition of the lights in relation to ventilators and sprinklers have all been carefully planned to give the greatest efficiency and pleasure.

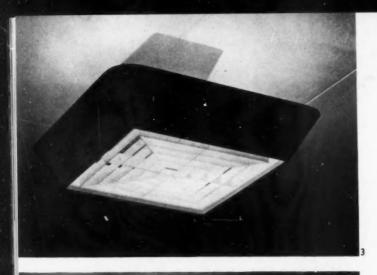
The ground-floor ceiling is of suspended plaster painted blue and it conceals the services from which the fittings are hung. These are square tapered frames in aluminium which appear to float below the ceiling because the top member is recessed and painted blue to match the plaster, I. The pattern across the ceiling is developed by the air-conditioning anemostats of two concentric cones, the outer of the same blue and the inner of pale grey, which are set on the centre lines of the bays. Diagonal lines of sprinklers complete the design.

The first-floor ceiling of LLOYD board, painted cornhusk, is hung in squares from metal runners which also support the light fittings, 2. These are wide saucer domes which act as

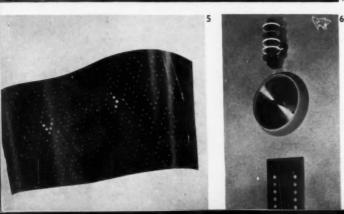
- I The square frames are tapered from the top towards the moulding which contains the 'egg-crate' on aluminium bars. Designed by the architects in collaboration with Lee Beesley & Co Ltd.
- 2 The saucer dome which is let into the ceiling is stove enamelled white and the light-shield is painted flame red-This fitting was not specially designed and is by Merchant Adventurers Ltd.











3 One of a range of fittings specially designed and mounted through the two-foot squares of TALON ceiling. The pyramids of sheet steel are white and the tapered metal light-shield is either red or cream.

reflectors for the element fixed in the conical boss at the centre. A similar ceiling is used on the second floor but the light fittings are not recessed; they hang from inverted pyramids and again appear to float in line astern, 3.

There was insufficient height on the lower ground floor to suspend a ceiling, so the architects devised a framework of trunking and mahogany 'egg-crates' in which the fittings were housed. Although this solved the technical problem and produced a flexible system within the narrow limits, the result is oppressive. The heavy formality of this rectilinear treatment is, however, relieved by the wall brackets whose pierced metal shields sparkle in a pattern of diapers against the tapering columns, 4 and 5.

Apart from the imaginative treatment of the interior lighting there are several examples of good detail, such as the staff signal unit, clock and lift indicator, which are an excellent combination of clarity and elegance, 6.

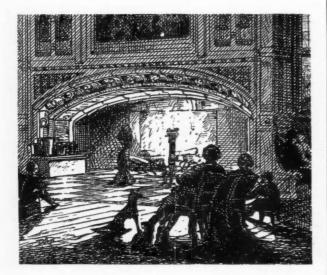
It is the coherent, and in the main sensitive, designing of the ceilings and lighting which reflects most the architectural distinction of this fine new building.

4 and 5 In order to give an incandescent glow and glitter to the general fluorescent lighting the architects designed this lightshield as a scroll of perforated sheet metal. The outside is painted blue (Archrome 34) and the inside white to throw an uninterrupted light on to the column.

6 The discs of the staff signal are in clear, and the stem in black, plastic against a chromium-plated backplate; made and designed by Standard Telephones. The clock by Gent & Co Ltd is faced in natural aluminium, cased with a special ivory finish. The lift indicator is in anodised aluminium by J. & E. Hall Ltd.

#### THE PLACE

#### OF THE FIRE



The recent Beaver 'Report of the Committee on Air Pollution'\* advocated the rapid development of 'smokeless zones' which would entail radical changes in the use of domestic fuel. Though it would be necessary in these areas to burn smokeless fuels such as coke instead of coal, there are still too few appliances capable of burning coke satisfactorily. The problem increases, however, with the number of coke-burning appliances which are installed since the amount of smokeless fuel available is limited. It is therefore of vital importance that the most efficient type of appliance, giving the maximum heat from the minimum fuel, is developed. Some of the appliances which have recently been evolved to meet this need are discussed in the following article. \*H M S O 28 6d

#### J. Beresford-Evans



HE WAYS OF HEATING a home that are traditional in Britain are comic or incomprehensible elsewhere. They are based on an abundance of cheap coal and a disregard for domestic labour. Although the warmth never corresponded to the effort, and circumstances are now totally different, we feel, rightly, that there is 'nothing like a nice bright fire'. Now, however, shortage of fuel makes us question the efficiency of our methods and notice that our homes may be warm at the fireplaces

but are often miserably cold everywhere else.

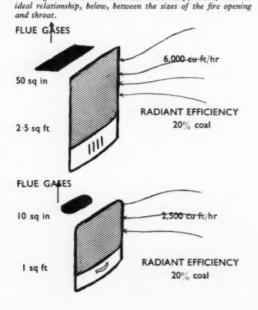
We have far less fuel and underclothes than our grandfathers, but we still have a climate that is insufferably cold during five months in the year. It is appropriate, therefore, to consider the design of home fires, both for technical reasons and to see how changes in design may affect our domestic habits.

#### Open fires

The open fire is so characteristic of our way of life that we are surprised when a foreigner asks why this dangerous indoor bonfire does not burn the house down. We admit the stuffy efficiency of the stove but really regard it as a foreign habit, impersonal, unsocial, unaesthetic and suitable only for intellectuals living in accommodation units or for soldiers in barracks. We are obviously prepared to pay dearly to preserve our open fires, and recent surveys have shown that 98 per cent of all homes have a solid-fuel appliance in the main living-room, and that two-thirds of these are open fires. One and a quarter million of such fires, with an efficiency of about 20 per cent, are sold every year in spite of the fact that a stove with an open door may be 40 per cent efficient and a fully closed stove about 70 per cent efficient.

Roughly one-third of our coal each year (63,000,000 tons) is burnt for domestic use, for cooking, heating water and rooms. When compared with the immense needs of industry this seems an unusually large slice of

The diagram shows the traditional relationship, above, and the



our coal production; but the Ridley Committee has recently stated that 'Solid fuel, in modern appliances, is more efficient than gas or electricity'.\*

The Norman invention of a flued fireplace on a side wall may have been less efficient than the Anglo-Saxon campfire in the middle of the hall, though the Norman fireplace was more convenient. It went without question until 1630 when Louis Savot built in the Louvre a fireplace that circulated air under the grate, up the back of the fire and so back to the room. He was not thanked for this, and by the end of the eighteenth century we find Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count von Rumford,† also pleading for the use of brick linings, because they would reflect better than the new cast iron. He complained of "those partial heats on one side of the body, and cold blasts on the other" and said that "the immoderate size of the throats of chimneys is the principal cause of all their imperfections".

#### More heat from less fuel

Today we still use a large chimney, and we are still trying to reduce the enormous amount of cold air which it sucks in, so as to save some of the heat from the room lost up the flue. The ways of doing this do not differ materially from the conclusions reached by Rumford and his predecessors, but there is more to the problem than the design of an efficient appliance.

Important factors to be considered are:

- I That the efficiency of the appliance depends upon how much of the heat inherent in the coal can be turned into radiant or convected heat and delivered to the room.
- 2 That the amount of heat which goes into the house structure from the fire and its chimney can be nearly as large a quantity as that of the heat directly radiated from the fire. It can be useful in keeping the chill off the house - or can be wasted on the countryside by flues on outside walls or by dilution through excessive ventilation.
- 3 That a fire burns very little air about 500 cu ft per hour - but, as conventionally designed, will suck into the room and blow up the chimney anything up to 20 times as much cold air as it needs. An average figure might be a quarter of a ton of air per hour from outside.
- 4 That this incoming air will lower the temperature in the room but its effect as a draught is more important, as our grandfathers knew when they provided inglenooks, screens, plush door-curtains and other

 $<sup>^{\</sup>circ}$  Viscount Ridley, chairman of the committee on 'National Policy for the use of Fuel and Power Resources', 1952, I M S O. 4s 6d† Best-known work 'Of Chimney Fiscales', 1797.

means of diverting or reducing the cold blasts. Even warm air will have the uncomfortable draught effect if it is moving at speed. To quote Rumford again: "The Russian soldiers who wintered in this country in the years 1798–9 were generally unable to support the cold within doors."

5 That ventilation sufficient for health and the avoidance of stuffiness requires few changes of air. With moderate air movement the minimum combustion of the fire provides more than enough fresh air for ordinary domestic needs. A room can easily feel stuffy when there is warm, still air at high level, although there may be a gale blowing lower down.

6 That a sense of comfort depends on more than a high air-temperature. Loss of heat from the body is compensated by re-radiation from insulated walls; a feeling of coldness is noticeable when standing near 'cold' walls, such as stone or concrete, or when near windows. The ideal of comfort, for most people, is probably a windless spring day, where the air temperature is medium but the sun is warming.

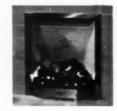
#### Avoiding draughts

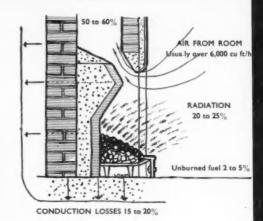
To fulfil these needs we must first of all limit the amount of air taken up by the fire. A closed stove draws in no more than the bare minimum which it needs for combustion; and this, rather than 'appliance efficiency', makes stove-users so enthusiastic. It is, however, possible to reduce the throat of the flue from an open fire and to reduce the area of the fire opening without loss of radiant efficiency. This means less draught – less circulation of cold air. Consequently the flue gases are hotter because they are not so diluted, and they therefore give out more heat to the house as they go up the chimney.

Most other factors in the complicated problem of keeping warm are secondary to the avoidance of draughts. A widely held American view is that an open fire will make a centrally heated room colder. Nevertheless one of the most endearing characteristics of the open fire is the large proportion of radiated heat at low level. This is most valuable, if low-level draughts can be avoided, Comtimued on page 40

STOOLGRATE

The traditional stoolgrate, suave and well fitted to the popular concept of a fireplace – and so inefficient a means of turning coal into useful heat that society has been immobilised each winter into close-packed circles round the hearth.

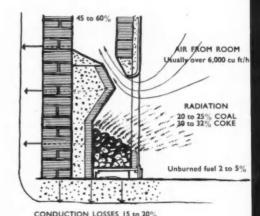




#### COKE GRATE

A fireclay-lined pit keeps the fire incandescent, burns a fairly wide range of smokeless and other fuels and, with a measure of air control, the rate of burning can be influenced. This is not a new fire but an improvement of details of the old fire, which is apparent when we consider the prominent piece of vitroous enamelled iron – rather ill at ease in usurping the traditional grate.

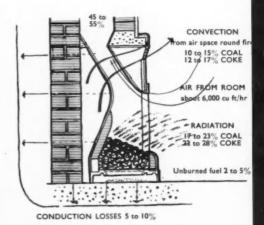


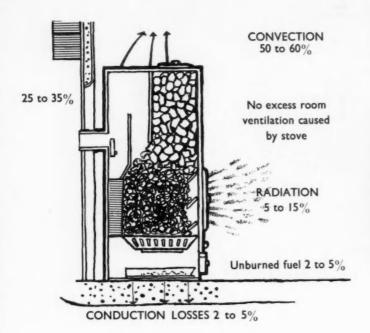


#### BUILT-IN CONVECTOR

The traditional open fire can be further modified by providing for convected heat. Partially wasted heat from the back and sides of the fire can be diverted to warm the air that is drawn round the fire casing and then returned to the livingspace at a higher level. This is the palliative used by Savot in 1630.



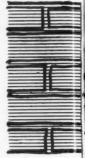




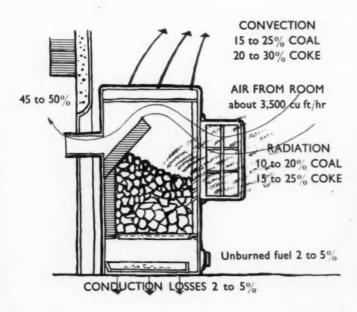
#### **CLOSED STOVE**

Closed stoves usually require special fuels, but will burn for long periods on a hopper feed and require little attention. Their output is mainly convected heat and they are, therefore, usually considered more appropriate to halls than to livingrooms.





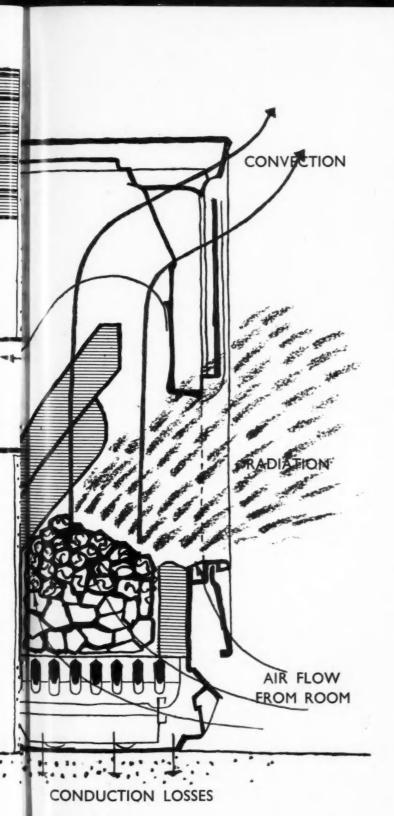
The photographs on pages 35 and 36 show typical examples of fires illustrated in principles in the accompanying diagrams.



#### **OPENABLE STOVE**

The openable stove pays for its versatility by some loss of efficiency. The one illustrated is remarkable for the sensible use of cast iron: the slight crowning to the sides and top reduces the apparent bulk and is good foundry practice. Notice especially the use of texture and careful detailing of hinges. Here is an appliance which makes technical concessions to achieve a compromise performance, but it has grasped the problems of appearance design with unusual sureness.







#### 'SOFONO SUNRAY' Grange

Camelon Iron Co Ltd

Here is a deep firebox, high front and prominent firebrick back, which is the modern trend for fires that will burn coke and keep in all night. It is most interesting, however, in that the whole appliance is free-standing-like a stove with a back flue-pipe - and circulates convected air within the casing. Outlets for the warmed air are around the reeded panel in the front; but it makes no concessions to existing fireplace openings and stands with top and sides exposed. A safety grille of fine MONEL METAL wire can be drawn down without much loss to radiation. No official BCURA performance figures are yet available.

### The data here are: a fire opening that is as small as possible 45 to 55% without limiting the radiant output, and a restricted throat to keep induced draught to a minimum; an ability to burn a wide range of fuels; and full use of the heat from combustion in radians and convected form. These are true open fires, although they are free-standing with air circulating on all sides, so that they must be placed somehow before the conventional firebrick openings provided (to take stoolgrates). The original research into the principle of this type of appliance was carried out by the British Coal Utilisation Research Association, Leatherhead. 'Efficiency in Domestic Heating' by J. S. Hales, Director, Domestic Appliances Laboratories, BCURA (COKE AND GAS, December 1953); 'Room Heating for Comfort', J. S. Hales (THE IRONMONGER, September 4, 1954); and other BCURA publications. CONVECTION from air space around the fire 12 to 16% COAL 15 to 20% COKE AIR FROM ROOM 1,500 cu ft/hr No excess caused by fire RADIATION 20 to 23% COAL 22 to 25% COKE UNBURNED FUEL 2 to 5% CONDUCTION LOSSES 5 to 7% 38 Design: Number 73

FREE-STANDING CONVECTION FIRE



de nt re ust gs he





PARKRAY

'HURDAPTA' Hurseal Ltd
'PARKRAY' Radiation Ltd
'SWIFT' Grange Camelon Iron Co Ltd

These three fires, each in its own way, seek logically to exploit the good points of both fire and stove by going back to fundamentals rather than by making compromises. They will eventually stand or fall on their technical success, but meanwhile there is still the problem of visual (and emotional) adjustment to normal domestic concepts. A new fire needs for many years to adapt itself to the shapes of old houses, but it must also be sure of itself and acquire a full measure of dignity. Houses are built with firebacks and flues of the traditional sort and the free-standing open fire with restricted throat needs in most cases to fit itself into such surroundings. The old flue opening is sealed off around the new throat and there is then a free air passage all round the back of the appliance. Induced air is kept to a minimum by the balance between the front opening and the small throat. Unavoidable heat losses in the flue are kept low because the gases here are not diluted by an inrush of room air. The proportions of radiant and convected heat produced are close to ideal requirement. Note the experimental setting by J. S. Hales for the 'Hurdapta' fire, in which reeded glass panels, splayed at an angle of 45 degrees, direct warm air currents back into the room.



Design: Number 73

for it balances the normal accumulation of warm air at high level.

Coal fires in the bedrooms have gone along with the 'tweenies' and coal at 25s a ton. Apart from gas or electric fires, the living-room fire can provide a measure of warmth to other rooms in the house. In the perfectly designed house an internal flue will give out its heat to the body of the house and the warm ceiling of the living-room will heat the floor of the bedroom above. If more complete heating is required for other rooms, a measure of central heating may be installed. When incorporated in an open-plan house where walls and ceilings are well insulated this form of heating allows warm air to circulate freely to all parts.

#### Fuel economy

Unfortunately, few houses are built with well-insulated walls, and the Egerton standards\* of insulation are minimum values which are sometimes reached but seldom exceeded. Open planning is rare, fires are fitted into openings built on traditional lines, and flues are built by bricklayers for the convenience of sweeps. Even the show house has its 'nice bright fire' in the merchant's cheapest stoolgrate which is set in an outside flue, and made to look gorgeous with a wealth of ceramic ingenuity.

It can be proved that expenditure to improve the heating of a house will be repaid within a few years by the saving in fuel. There are over 240 days in the year in Britain when heating is desirable and this is provided by open fires which burn for an average of thirteen hours a day, and produce 1,000,000 tons of smoke a year. Most of our fires will heat the room well when the air is about 60°F (when they are seldom lit), but at 50° or 55° we need to gather round them for warmth.

However, local authorities and other builders are reluctant to increase capital costs, and although the tiled surround and the conventional breast are expensive they have an unquestioned acceptance that would not at once be given to more logical modern practice.

#### Symbol of hospitality

Thus the old order persists and, inured to discomfort, we claim this to be a temperate climate where there is no need to build houses as fortresses against the frost; no need for the storm sashes, double glazing and furnaces of the Continentals. Most people want to have a great flame-spurting blaze, and would sacrifice a good deal to get it. Such a fire, halfway up the chimney if possible, is a symbol of hospitality, family life and prosperity. Such fuel as we can afford is usually small coal – but the legend of Yule logs and Beltane fires remains.

Gas and electrical heaters have slipped in almost without comment, for they did not disturb the coal fire in the living-room. Television has dampened the blaze and borrowed the focus of the hearth for a few hours. It is changing the shapes of furniture and patterns of hospitality, but the hearth, the ancient centre of the home, is not easily to be usurped. If our rooms can be heated evenly all over, without scorching and without draughty cold spots, the temporary disruption of television may encourage people to accept the concessions that have to be made if a modern appliance is to be fitted.

#### Recent developments

The way towards a reasonable solution has a long history, but appliances are now appearing on the market which compromise between the qualities of the open fire with its radiant heat, and the stove with its efficiency and convected heat. These new open fires have a fairly high overall efficiency without much excess of induced draught over their combustion needs. The rate of burning can be controlled, and slow continuous burning is possible. Being free-standing appliances, they will fit into old houses as well as new ones, and they can remain tenants' fixtures. Such fires can be set in front of a standard fireplace opening or in a recess, for they are as self-contained as a stove. Air can circulate all round and behind the casing, and they meet the house structure only at the flue connection. A wide range of fuels can be burnt in them, with little or no smoke production, and they should meet the heating needs of most families. We must not forget, however, that these fires represent a new solution to an old social and economic problem. They are technical solutions which still reveal much of their laboratory and foundry origins, and show the need for a more sympathetic approach to design for appearance. Appliance efficiency itself is not enough, for heating-comfort is a complex matter, and the house fire that fills the 'hole in the wall' is a centre of strong aesthetic and even 'dynastic' emotion. Here, in the next few years, is a wide field for designers whose aesthetic sensibilities can be used to develop these appliances in a manner which appeals to the homeproud instincts of our traditional way of life.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm o}$  Post-war Building Studies, 19, 'Heating and Ventilation of Dwellings', 1945, H M S O, 2s  $\delta d.$ 



The Standard Ten 'Estate Car' is more useful than beautiful, and will stand up to hard work.

#### Two new estate cars

Following his article 'Three Vehicles Wanted' (DESIGN October 1954) we asked Mr Wilkes to comment on recent developments in the design of estate cars.

THE NUMBER of estate cars at the Motor Show last autumn showed the growing popularity of this type of vehicle, and in view of my recent plea for a smarter type of estate car, it may be of interest to describe some of the newcomers. Estate cars do not follow any one pattern but can be roughly divided into four main types: van-like cars designed for load-carrying; rugged cars for rough usage; the traditional 'shooting-brake' type of coachbuilt timber construction; and the estate car which imitates the saloon car for the sake of smartness.

Good examples of current production estate cars of each of these types are, respectively, the Hillman 'Husky'; the Willys '4-wheel-drive

Station Wagon'; the Morris 'Traveller's Car'; the Nash Rambler 'Cross Country'. Each has its own particular attraction so that the designer must have a clear idea of his potential market. There is of course a certain amount of overlap between these types, such as between the first and second, or the third and fourth. But it is almost impossible to attain the load-carrying capacity, the rear-door arrangement, and utilitarian finish of the first type with the more sporting lines and general smartness of the last type. The requirements are too contradictory, and such a compromise may mean missing both

The Hillman 'Husky', however, boldly attempts such a compromise. As a result it makes no claim for outstanding luggage-carrying capacity, or a particular ability to traverse ploughed fields, or a traditional coachbuilt appearance, or the sleekness of a good-looking saloon car. Its success is assured for quite another

reason - its low price in relation to its quality.

The new Standard Ten 'Estate Car' places usefulness before appearance, and its commercial vehicle features are difficult to disguise. It has four side doors, two van-type rear doors, considerable luggage-carrying capacity, and the colour and trim are designed for hard work.

Neither of these two new estate cars nor the new Austin A 30 'Countryman' makes any real contribution to the market that I had in mind in my recent article. This is the market of the ordinary saloon car motorist who would welcome the extra convenience of an estate car arrangement in exchange for a luggage boot, but who does not want to lose the appearance of a smart private car. The Morris 'Traveller's Car' is one of the few production estate cars which satisfy this requirement. Although employing the timber framing of traditional estate car construction, the design is not overloaded with the tortuous curves and drooping lines liked by so many coachbuilders. In fact the very smartness of the body is due to the straight lines, slender pillars, absence of radii in the corners of the windows, and a pleasant balance between wood and metal. One is no longer conscious of a box-type body with piercings for windows, but rather of a roof supported on pillars. This visual separation of the roof structure from the lower part of the body is the secret of many good-looking cars.

The Nash Rambler once again provided the smartest estate car at the Show. This year it was a design by Farina employing a stepped roof and a roof rack – in a manner that would probably have seemed quite outrageous to an English manufacturer, but which was surprisingly successful when seen on this car. Certainly there was no question of the car resembling a commercial vehicle while still providing the rear loading. The tailboard and a single rear window look better than doors, and are also, no doubt, more useful.

E. G. M. WILKES

The Hillman 'Husky' of the Rootes Group. A cheap, all-purpose car.





#### WEA

#### Society's first decade

The American Society of Industrial Designers (S I D) is ten years old. To celebrate the passing of this first decade, the Society arranged an exhibition at its annual congress which was held last year in Williamsburg. Many products and photographs of products designed by members of the Society were displayed together with a photographic exhibit from several foreign design organisations. Included in this display were 40 photographs of products designed by members of the British Society of Industrial Artists, selected from products illustrated in DESIGNERS IN BRITAIN 4.

The SID was formed by 16 members who elected Walter Dorwin

Teague as the first president. Under his guidance the main objectives of the Society were set out – to promote better understanding among members, to sponsor design training and to publish information about design and design activities. In the years that followed, men with names well known on both sides of the Atlantic became presidents of the Society – Raymond Loewy, Henry Dreyfuss, Harold Van Doren, Egmont Arens, Dave Chapman, Russel Wright, Jean Reinecke, Robert H. Hose.

Today the membership stands at over 170. The list of activities carried out by the Society is impressive, including many lectures, exhibitions and publications of various types. Perhaps best known of these are the two volumes U S INDUSTRIAL DESIGN and the more recent INDUSTRIAL DESIGN IN AMERICA 1954. At present the Society is organising a programme for German and Danish teams to visit the States to study American industrial design methods.

Some recent designs by members of the Society are illustrated here.

BELOW Telephone designed by Henry Dreyfuss for Bell Telephone Laboratories Inc. Note the position of the numerals and letters on the dial so that they are not covered by the finger when dialling.



BELOW Balanced-beam candy scale designed by J. M. Little and Associates for the Toledo Scale Co. The scale indicates the amount an article is over or under the weight selected on the balance-beam.





LEFT Portable battery or mains operated tape-recorder. It is only 15 inches long and can be fitted with retractable steel legs. Designed by Raymond Spilman for J. C. Warren Corporation.



RIGHT Electric plane made of polished die-cast aluminium. Designed by Peter Muller-Munk Associates for the Porter-Cable Machine Co.

#### PRANCE

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#### Interiors on show

Examples of modern French furniture and furnishings were shown recently in the Salon des Arts Ménagers, the equivalent, roughly, of our own DAILY MAIL 'Ideal Home Exhibition'. The Salon des Arts Ménagers is an annual event in Paris lasting about a month, in which a number of exhibitions, conferences and discussions are held on various aspects of the domestic arts. One of the exhibitions, entitled 'Le décor d'aujourd'hui', showed a series of furnished rooms, some of which are illustrated here.

Perhaps because of their Baroque tradition the French have been slow to embrace the post-war developments in furniture and interior design. 'Le décor d'aujourd'hui' shows, however, that some designers are rapidly making up for lost time. Though clearly inspired, in some instances, by designs from the USA and from other parts of Europe, these rooms have a cosy elegance which reflects the French 'flair' for imaginative treatments in many branches of the visual arts. The pendant lighting fittings particularly are delicate and graceful, qualities often lacking today in much equipment of this type.

In the fifth annual exhibition, 'Formes Utiles', also held at the Salon, several new designs for cane chairs were displayed. These chairs were the result of a competition organised by the Union des Artistes Modernes, the winning design of which is illustrated below.



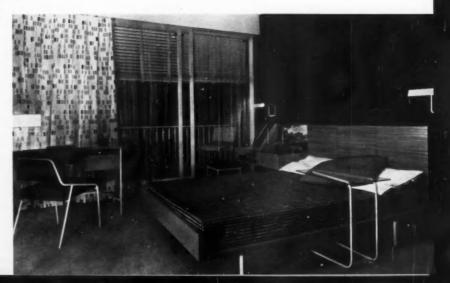
ABOVE Living-room setting from 'Le décor d'aujourd'hui', designed by J. A. Motte and Michel Mortier. Motte also designed the unit bookcases, the desk and the low tables. Mortier designed the string-back armchair and wall storage unit. The textiles are by Bruner Lecomte.

RIGHT Pendant lighting fittings by Lempereur from 'Le décor d'aujourd'hui'. A metal circle below the cone reflects light on to the delicate tracery of the expanded metal discs.

BELOW Bedroom setting from 'Le décor d'aujourd'hui' designed by Alain Richard. The curtain fabric was designed by J. Iribe.

BELOW LEFT The winning chair, designed by P. Villain, in the competition organised by the Union des Artistes Modernes and shown in the exhibition 'Formes Utiles'.





#### SWEDEN

#### Cutlery and ceramics

Since the early 'thirties Sweden has been one of the great leaders in the field of domestic design. After the war, however, this leadership has been challenged by others and it is sometimes claimed that this or that country, perhaps by virtue of greater technical inventiveness, has forged ahead. Whether or not this is so is a matter for conjecture, but it is true to say that Swedish design has had, and is still having, a profound influence on that of the rest of the world. It is also clear from the examples illustrated here that a strong aesthetic sensibility still controls the appearance of widely differing Swedish products. One would surely have to search far to find a piece of ceramic ware so sensitively modelled and so elegant in proportion as the drinking-fountain, right.

The photographs have been sent to us by Eva Ralf, DESIGN correspondent in Stockholm.



ABOVE Wall drinking-fountain made of vitreous china in pale blue and other colours. Designed by Stig Lindberg for Gustavsbergs Fabriker:

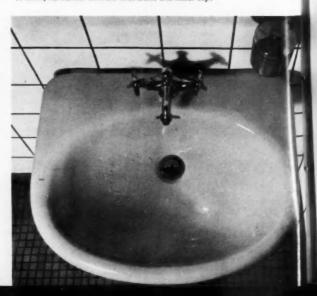
BELOW 'Facette' stainless steel flatware designed by Folke Arström for Gense.



BELOW Package for stainless steel steak-knives designed by Folke Arström for Gense. The pack consists of a wooden base with a transparent plastic cover. These knives and the flatware illustrated above are distributed in this country by Finnar Ltd.



BELOW Lavatory basin designed by Stig Lindberg for Gustavsbergs Fabriker. Note how the smooth forms, which express the quality of ceramic, harmonise with the neat waste and mixer tap.



#### HOLLAND

#### UMS unit furniture

The rich flow of fine modern furniture from the designers and manufacturers of Denmark, often overshadows the interesting work which is being carried out in the neighbouring Netherlands country – Holland. One Dutch firm, Utrechtsche Machinale Stoel-en Meubelfabriek, is particularly notable for a range of furniture, which, if lacking in the sophisticated elegance of many Danish designs, is yet graceful in proportion and practical in a wide variety of applications.

The range itself is extensive, consisting of well over 100 items including furniture for both the office and the home. They are based on the unit principle and many of the pieces are demountable to save freight charges. The woods used are mostly either birch or oak with natural finishes, though some of the carcase units can be obtained with plywood sliding doors painted white, green, blue, brown or grey. These colours are repeated in the cover pattern of one of the firm's catalogues. A more lavish illustrated catalogue, shown here, reflects the care and discrimination in the design of all the UMS pieces which were carried out by the firm's staff designer, C. Braakman.



ABOVE Combined table and magazine rack constructed on a metal framework. The rack is of perforated metal and the table top of birch.

BELOW A spread from one of the firm's catalogues. Information is printed in four languages.





Design: Number 73

LEFT Storage cabinet of birch. One version is available with stiding instead of folding doors. The sliding doors glide on plastic rails and are produced in several colour finishes. Another version has metal legs.

RIGHT Sofa of birch with laminated legs and armrest. It is upholstered with foam rubber on springs.



#### JAPAN

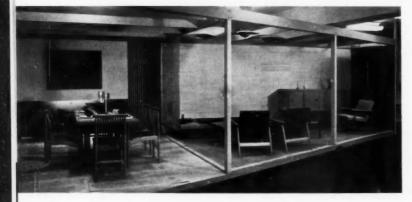
#### A Western approach

The ease with which Western thought was assimilated by Japanese manufacturers before the war is well known. Now evidence of a new interest in Western 'modern', particularly in the home-furnishings trade, comes to us in a series of photographs of an exhibition recently held in Tokyo called 'Design and Technique'. This exhibition was sponsored by the Japanese Industrial Arts Institute, an organisation run by the government Ministry of International Trade and Industry. Its activities are broader than similar organisations in other parts of the world, and in spite of its name it embraces both crafts and industrial design. Its object is not only to promote good design; it also studies production techniques, carries out research and develops its own experimental designs. All the pieces in the exhibition were designed by members of the Institute's staff, and thus represent an official taste which manufacturers and members of the public are encouraged to follow.

The influence of Western thought is most marked in the planning of the room settings, though the extensive use of bamboo – the only apparently indigenous element in the designs – seems unhappy in combination with familiar Western chair forms. What comes through most clearly, however, is not the individual quality of the designs themselves, which seem clumsy to our eyes, but Japan's determination to explore all the avenues of modern design in her growing search for new world markets.

BELOW Dining chair with seat of woven split rattan and back of cotton rope.





LEFT Living and dining areas in one of the model rooms.

RIGHT Living room for a town flat. The dining area is behind the cabinets on the left.





LEFT Dining chair. Split rattan is used for the back and seat.

# NEWS

#### **REPORTS & CONFERENCES**

#### 'Making a mess'

Speaking at a 'New Thinking' luncheon organised by The Industrial Welfare Society, Sir Hugh Casson, President of the Architectural Association, said some sharp things about the 'dirty look' of industry. Those industries which, by their nature, could not help making a mess should not be blamed, provided they were not proud of it, and tried to clear it up when they had finished. Some industries still wrongly believed that "where there's muck there's money". In fact ugliness was a symptom of disorder, which in a competitive world no industry could afford. Ugliness is caused by people not caring what their surroundings look like, and also by ignorance and fear.

Sir Hugh said that people should not be

Sir Hugh said that people should not be frightened of making mistakes. They could experiment, for instance, with colour if they would only learn to see for themselves. Never trust other people's judgment of what is tidy, Sir Hugh recommended, but employ people who have been trained to use their eyes, because they will do the job properly, even if they do not produce a

nasterpiece.

#### **International Art Congress**

Under the protection of HM Gustaf Adolf, King of Sweden, the Ninth International Art Congress will be held from August 8-13, 1955 at the university town of Lund in the south of Sweden. The Prime Minister, Dr Tage Erlander, will act as honorary president of the congress, in which all countries are invited to take part.

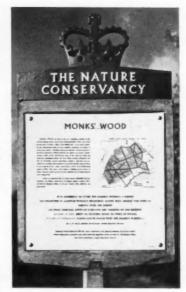
#### Design for embankments

The Design and Industries Association recently held a luncheon meeting at the Royal Society, Burlington House, when B. J. J. Moran spoke about 'Design on Railway Embankments'. He described the various trees, shrubs and flowers which the Garden Section of London Transport plants on embankments to prevent them slipping and to improve their appearance. He illustrated his talk with a wide range of slides in monochrome and colour.

#### COMPETITIONS

#### Italian medals for Britain

The International Jury at the Tenth Triennale (DESIGN October 1954 page 8, December 1954 pages 14, 19) has made seven awards to the British designers whose work was included in the British exhibit. The Gran Premio went to Lucienne Day for her textile designs which are produced by Heal's Wholesale and Export Ltd. Gold medals were awarded to Robin Day for the design of Hille furniture, and to Ernest Race for the design of Race furniture. Lucie Rie and Hans Coper won a gold medal for their ceramics, and John Reid a silver medal for light fittings made by George Forrest & Son Ltd.



#### Reserve preserved

This Reserve sign for the Nature Conservancy was designed by D. Clark and P. J. Moulding of the Royal College of Art. The concrete standard and frame and the cast iron crown and headpiece were produced by the coordinated services unit of Holland & Hannen and Cubitts Ltd. Warerite Ltd were responsible for the plaques bearing the letterpress and maps, which are executed in a tough plastic material that cannot be defaeed. The cast iron lettering has been left rough, and in this respect does not follow the intention of the designers.

#### **Textile Institute**

The closing dates for submitting applications to enter the Textile Institute's competitions for 1955 are April 30 for entries and July 1 for specimens. All inquiries should be made to the General Secretary, the Textile Institute, 10 Blackfriars Street, Manchester 3.

#### National Park

The Snowdonia Park Joint Advisory Committee offers a prize of £50 for the best-designed symbol to be used in connection with the Snowdonia National Park. The symbol should be recognisable at a glance and be readily distinguishable by people passing in trains, motor-cars or buses; capable of use either on its own or with milestones, direction boards, and so on, and easily recognisable when reduced to medallion size as for example on a badge, armlet or writing-paper; suitable for use in black and white or colour; and suitable for reproduction at a reasonable cost, if possible by local craftsmen. If the competitors wish the words 'Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri' and 'Snowdonia National Park', or the appropriate initials, may be included in the symbol, but if wording is inserted it must be either in Welsh only or in both English and Welsh. The competition will be judged by a panel of judges appointed by the Snowdonia Park Joint Advisory Committee, which will have the right to withhold the prize if no entry is considered worthy of the award. The copyright of the winning design will be

#### Silver for tea

An exhibition of modern silver, organised by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths of London, was recently held at the Tea Centre in Lower Regent Street. This tea-set, one of the principal exhibits, was designed by Eric G. Clements, and made by Wakely & Wheeler Ltd. The finish of these hand-made pieces is particularly fine, but the handle of the teapot is not ideally suited to a convenient grip when pouring.



vested in the Committee, to which entries should be submitted under a pseudonym, accompanied by the competitor's name and address in a sealed envelope. Entries should be sent to the Clerk to the Joint Advisory Committee, County Offices, Penarlag, Dolgelley, Merioneth, by January 31, 1955.

#### **EXHIBITIONS**

#### New homes from old houses

Until the end of May there will be an exhibition at the Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, E2, where a greater part of the contents of the flat which the W V S furnished for the 'New Homes from Old Houses' exhibition last summer will be on view. Four rooms from the flat are shown, for which cheerful colours have been chosen.

#### Good catalogues

The '100 Good Catalogues' Exhibition (DESIGN October 1954 pages 34-42) which was held at the headquarters of the British Institute of Management in London, is now on tour. From January 5-8 it will be on view at the Capitol Cinema Restaurant, Cardiff; from January 13-20 at the College of Art, Derby, and from January 24-29 at the College of Art, Wolverhampton.

#### Woodcut exhibition

An exhibition of 200 colour woodcuts from 25 countries is open at the Victoria and Albert Museum until January 16. This is the first time that an international exhibition of this type has been held, and its most surprising feature is the inclusion of extries from Japan and China. The Japanese artists seem to have been strongly influenced by recent tendencies in American abstract painting, and have produced large prints deliberately drawn in the most crude and slapdash fashion. The Chinese woodcuts are traditional, and like many of the other entries, attain a high standard.

#### **Ideal Home**

The DAILY MAIL 'Ideal Home Exhibition' of 1955 will be held at Olympia from March 1-26.

#### Lighting showroom

Note the wall bracket, ceiling pendant and floor standard in this new GEC showroom for modern lighting fittings. A feature on this subject will appear in the next issue of DESIGN.





#### Cigarette case

Lacrinoid Products Ltd has produced for Benson & Hedges Ltd this case which holds 100 cigarettes. It is injection moulded from diakon cream material and silk-screen printed in gold. It has a close but free-fitting lid.

#### PUBLICATIONS

#### The Ambassador

The main feature in issue No 11, 1954, of THE AMBASSADOR is called 'Sir Winston Churchill sartorially considered', and commemorates the Prime Minister's eightieth birthday with a series of photographs showing his dress throughout his life.

#### Furniture booklet

The British Rubber Development Board has recently published a small booklet on 'Latex Foam in Furniture', containing papers on the subject which were given last year at the conference organised by this board. Copies of 'Proceedings of the Latex Foam in Furniture Conference' can be obtained, free of charge, from The British Rubber Development Board, Market Buildings, Mark Lane, London EG.

#### Solder products

Enthoven Solders Ltd has recently published a product catalogue, together with a leaflet on the SUPERSPEED soldering iron. Copies of these publications, and any additional information, will be sent to any inquirer upon request. The address is Enthoven House, 89 Upper Thames Street, London Ec4.

#### Stone past and present

With the range of new building materials growing constantly wider, the importance of the eternal ingredients of architecture is liable to be overlooked. The British Stone Federation has recently taken steps to ensure that stone, at any rate, does not suffer this fate, and has brought out a bi-monthly bulletin to promote the "king of building materials". The bulletin, appropriately enough, is called STONE, and the first issue

reviews very briefly the uses to which stone was put in the ancient world, and then discusses the more limited modern use. "Stone has become mainly a facing material, as when it faced the brick walls of Assyrian palaces." The wheel, in fact, has gone full circle, and the bulletin will no doubt revolve it still further so that stone in the future can hold a beauty as great as that of the past. The bulletin is an attractive publication and is designed and produced by Laurence G. French and Anthony Adams.

#### Good design

'The Value of Good Design', a report on the Scottish Design Congress at Edinburgh 1954 (DESIGN July 1954 page 40), is edited by Alister Maynard and published by the Scottish Committee of CoID, price 2s. Copies can be obtained from the CoID, Tilbury House, Petty France, London Sw1, or from 95 Bothwell Street, Glasgow C2.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

#### **Design for Plastics**

The Council of the Plastics Institute has recently set up a Design Committee whose objects are, amongst others, to further the interests of good product-design; to recommend lecturers on design subjects for section meetings of the Institute and for art schools; to guide the education and training of young designers; to hold design conferences; to provide library facilities for members; and to arrange exhibitions of well-designed articles. The chairman of the committee is F. E. Middleditch. The other members are Bruce Brown, M. D. Curwen, R. P. H. Gillett, T. Gray, R. Hooper, Philip Morgan, Paul Reilly, M. Rowlands, I. E. White, J. K. White, A. H. Woodfull.

#### An unusual flask

The tea-flask by Vacco Ltd has two unusual features. There is a 'polythene' stopper, which the makers claim does not disintegrate, is easy to keep clean, and grips the neck of the flask securely. There is also a built-in milk-bottle, shaped like an ink-pot, and fitted in the detachable container which screws into the base of the flask.



#### Unwanted reflections

Clear glass on a dial often has a mirroring effect that makes it impossible to read the dial at certain angles. Pilkington Brothers Ltd has attempted to solve this problem with a glass which neither reflects nor reduces the amount of light transmitted. The glass only functions satisfactorily when the dial face of the instrument is reasonably close behind the glass. It is available in substances 2·6/3·2 mm and upwards, and at present in sizes up to 18 x 12 inches which can be obtained toughened if required. Bent glass to approved curves is available as well as flat glass.

#### Street-lighting columns

In 1952 the Ministry of Transport, at the request of the Royal Fine Art Commissions, which had previously been responsible, invited the CoID to take over the task of advising manufacturers on the design of street-lighting columns. The efforts of the Council's 'street furniture' committee have led to an improvement in standards in this field and recently the CoID has published a list of approved designs (price 2s 6d), which has been circulated to over 2,000 local authorities in Britain. The Council hopes to extend its influence to other types of 'street furniture', such as seats, bus shelters, litter bins, and so on. The list can be obtained from the CoID.

#### Process timer



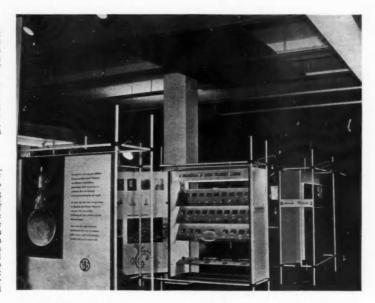
The 33-D Process Timer, made by E. J. Wender and Co, electrical and mechanical engineers, is designed for the automatic timing of a process over a selected period. The unit indicates visually the period of time lapsed and the balance of time in hand. This model is intended for photographic work in the darkroom, and has a glowing-dial and a luminous fixed setting-point.

#### Blocks from DESIGN

Readers are reminded that half-tone and line blocks of illustrations that have appeared in the magazine may be borrowed for editorial use. These blocks have a 133 screen, and can be obtained free, except for postage, from Aubrey Hewitt, CoID, Tilbury House, Petty France, London swi.

#### New DIA president

Sir Stephen Tallents was elected President of the Design and Industries Association, in succession to Sir Colin Anderson, at the annual general meeting of the Association on November 25. Sir Stephen has for many



#### **BT-H Showroom**

The British Thomson-Houston Co Ltd has opened a new showroom in the firm's offices at Crown House, Aldwych. Designed essentially as a shell in which a series of changing exhibitions can be arranged, its main interest is in the ceiling where the B T-H system of 'invertrunking' has been used in an unusual manner. This 'invertrunking', a form of inverted trunking on which lighting fittings may be easily assembled, has been used here as a framework to support coloured ceiling panels behind which lights are concealed. Two black walls form an effective background to the first exhibition 'Lighting Through the Ages'. The showroom was designed by T H M Partners.

#### Wallpapers for architects

A showroom for the Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd has been opened in the company's headquarters at 125 High Holborn. It is the setting for a new advisory service for architects who are invited to visit the showroom and discuss their interior design problems. Wallpapers of special interest to the profession are displayed, while pattern books containing the complete collection of designs from the WP M group are housed, for easy reference, in the cupboards along the end wall. The showroom was designed by Beck and Pollitzer Ltd in conjunction with the late Ian Colquhoun.



years been a leading expert in public relations, working successively with the Empire Marketing Board, the General Post Office and the BBC: it was during his period with the E M B that he helped to found the British Documentary Film Movement. He was a founder member and the first President of the Institute of Public Relations and is also Adviser on Public Relations to the Advertising Association.

#### New address

Roger Smithells, Editorial and Publishing Services, has now moved to new offices at 9 Great Chapel Street, Oxford Street, London WI.

#### **Packaging Design**

Among the winners in the 'Second British Paper Box & Carton Design Contest 1954' organised by the British Paper Box Federation, was this entry for Worcester Royal Porcelain Co Ltd. The competitor was Alfred Kent & Son Ltd, and the designers were G. H. Chase for the box and platform, and Jock Kinneir for the styling and label. Particulars of the awards can be obtained from the British Paper Box Federation, 27 Chancery Lane, London WC2.



#### Newspaper design award

This plaque has been awarded to THE TIMES as the best-designed newspaper of the year by the judges of the 'Annual Award for Newspaper Design'. In Class One of the award (Sunday and daily newspapers), THE TIMES again won, but this time in company with the DAILY WORKER. The winner in Class Two (evening newspapers) was the EVENING DESPATCH, Birmingham, and in Class Three (weeklies, bi-weeklies, and tri-weeklies) the SHOREHAM HERALD.







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#### Designs from two schools

The illustrations show examples of work recently carried out by pupils at a secondary modern and a grammar school in Middlesex. Apart from their high standard of construction these pieces have a quality of design which is outstanding among schoolwork. They are not produced to ready-made designs but are worked out with the teacher from original sketches made by the pupils. No scale drawings are used as these, the staff believes, give to pupils, inexperienced in their use, a false sense of scale and proportion. Left, hall table in rauli and Australian walnut by a group of boys aged 14 (Oakwood Secondary Modern School). Right, chair in mansonia by a group of boys aged 13 (Minchenden Secondary Grammar School).

#### Welding machine stand



SIR: While agreeing with the striking improvement in the appearance of the new welding machine stand (DESIGN September 1954 page 52), I would ask the designer only

two questions:

I How far can any wheeled structure be moved in a works without wishing to change direction

2 Has the designer even tried to change the direction of a structure running on four wheels the axles of all of which are fixed?

ROBERT FRASER Cimed-Fraser Tuson Ltd Cray Avenue

Orpington Kent

We asked Holden and Hunt to comment on these criticisms. A reply from Raymond Harris, chief draughtsman of the firm, is printed below:

"The answers to Mr Fraser's two questions appear to be:

I do not know.
From trials made by myself, the radiused edge of the tray can be used as a handle. In this manner, by lifting the rear pair of wheels, the new machine can be steered quite comfortably on the front pair. point was made quite clear in the original notes submitted for publication which stated 'It was no longer necessary to provide the two handles, as . . . the radiused edge of the tray is quite convenient'."

#### Fashion fabrics

SIR: I think a few facts concerning the sales of the group of dress prints I designed for John Lewis & Co Ltd last season, of which three were illustrated in your October issue page 50, may help to dispel some of the doubts expressed in your note.

There were six designs; and in all, 45,000 yards were printed for the home trade. The design on the extreme left of the photograph was the best-seller, the first printing of 7,000 yards being sold out almost immediately.

The demand was such that a reprint of this design, of 7,400 yards, was again sold out very quickly. All six designs were com-pletely sold within a few weeks.

It should be remembered that not everyone who buys a cotton dress length at 5s 11d per yard, which was the price of these prints, wants a sophisticated design. In fact, my clients expressly asked for some of these designs to be suitable for 'young' buyers.

Incidentally, there seems to be some con-fusion in the mind of the person who wrote

the note. I agree that the first requirement of a dress print is to be fashionable, but for that very reason, unlike a furnishing print, its life is a short one, and therefore need not attempt to stand up to "the rapidly changing demands of the fashion trade".

LUCIENNE DAY 40 Cheyne Walk Chelsea London swa

Since the life of a fashion fabric is compara-tively short, it seemed questionable if these dress prints, which hark back to the designer's earlier work for furnishings, are in key with current fashion trends. - EDITOR.

#### American comment

IR: E. G. M. Wilkes, in criticising the institute of British Carriage and Autonobile Manufacturers' Competition (DESIGN noble Manufacturers' Competition (pssign) August 1954 pages 36 and 37), points out a ituation which I had thought peculiar to J S A automobile design. Division between styling' and 'engineering' and overpecialisation are responsible, according



MG TC

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MG-TD



MG-TF

to Mr Wilkes, for the mediocrity of the winning designs

In support of Mr Wilkes, I would like to cite an actual automobile which seems to suffer from having been designed under similar conditions. I refer to the new M G — TF roadster. My fellow automobile en-thusiasts and I agree that this design is an thusiasts and I agree that this design is an ugly compromise of the forthright, clear-cut design of the MG-TC and its noble predecessors. The Jaguar XK-120 seems to have been the source of inspiration for the new convex radiator shell and the lights-infenders styling. The TF is neither a box with attachments' nor an 'envelope' design, but is rather an unsatisfactory combination of the two approaches.

of the two approaches.

The MG-TC is one of the most popular sports cars in this country. It was one of eight automobiles exhibited in the Museum of Modern Art's first automobile show three years ago. The exciting contrast between the TC's rectangular body and its long, graceful fender lines; and the obviously functional, but wonderfully ornamental large wise whose see qualities for mental, large wire wheels are qualities for which this automobile was selected.



#### Light fittings

SIR: I would like to draw your attention to page 27 of the October issue of DESIGN which states that ". . Peter Miller light fittings have been assembled with obvious which should, of course, have read "... and John Reid's Forrest Modern light fittings have been assembled with obvious care by Peter Miller ...". The light fittings for this job were in fact by George Forrest & Son Ltd, and should be well known to readers of DESIGN as they were prominently displayed on the cover of one of your recent

The whole point is that FORREST MODERN fittings were designed to encourage assemnttings were designed to encourage assemblies of this nature, a fact that was pointed out in one of your recent articles. I believe that Miller possibly had the rods which support the fittings made up by another contractor, but rod structures such as these have been made for some time by Forrest's and have been midely used. and have been widely used. Some of our systems and standard parts are described on pages 8 and 9 of our new catalogue (see illustration).

JOHN REID George Forrest & Son Ltd 30 Osborne Road London w3

An indication of the public's sentiment is that the TC, though older than the TD, often commands a higher price than the latter in our used-car markets.

I lament the passing of this exceptional design; and I hope that the errors of the T F will not persist, nor encourage other manufacturers to follow the 'applied design' path.

CARL F. ZAHN Executive Assistant
The Institute of Contemporary Art 138 Newbury Street Boston 16 USA

#### Taps

SIR: In J. Beresford-Evans's article in DESIGN October pages 20-5, he makes some references to the design of water-taps which do not reveal considerable knowledge of the

do not reveal considerable knowledge of the subject. I would, with all respect, submit that it is an essential prerequisite of criticism to know one's subject.

For example, Mr Beresford-Evans says that the tap has evolved from "pieces of brass that formed the visible termination of brass that the visible termination of brass that the visible termination of brass that the visible termination of t supply pipes". Brass cocks have been in use since the days of the Roman Empire and I have an illustration of these very early taps, not dissimilar in appearance from those now in use, which are in the British Museum. Owing to water-chatter these gave way to an invention by James Thomson (later Lord Kelvin) who invented a tap with a loose metallic sleeve, rather more than 100 years ago. The present screw-down fitting was first produced by a Yorkshire firm in 1845, and, with improvements, but with little or no fundamental changes, has been in use ever since.

Numerous experiments have been made, with varying success, but it remains true that the tap, as it has existed for a century, has proved in essence superior to alter-natives that have been evolved. It has never, natives that have been evolved. It has never, within my knowledge, which covers considerable research, been a brass-piece at the end of a pipe. It has always been physically and intrinsically an entity quite apart from the pipe to which it has been screwed or, earlier, plugged. I doubt whether any specification has occupied more time in the Committees of the British Standards Institution. The fear of wastage of water, of contamination through siphonage or through an overfull basin reaching the nose of the tap, the pet theories of that most individualistic class of the pet the periods of water of watering standards. people, the engineers of water undertakings - these and many other facets have entered into discussion with the result that the British are using a heavier and better tap than anywhere in the world.

I am astonished that your contributor should say that a "surprisingly large proportion of the output of the trade is still in a brass finish". Apart from stop-cocks a brass finish". Apart from stop-cocks chromium finish is the almost invariable custom and very few taps indeed that are used visibly are finished otherwise. I can support this statement statistically and would be interested to learn where Mr

Beresford-Evans got his information from.
He also says that some of the best work is found in special fittings for hospitals and sink mixers. The best work is nearly always found in the most expensive fields. These found in the most expensive neight. I nese fittings are made for a special purpose and it would be hopelessly uneconomic for them to be supplied for general use. Nor are they necessarily more efficient functionally.

Mr Beresford-Evans is also concerned at

the aesthetic appearance of a tap. I am not, because it has generally been found that attempts to beautify fittings of this type have resulted in reduced efficiency.

have resulted in reduced efficiency. The ugliest tap I know is one which drips. The essential purpose of a tap is to deliver water smoothly when required and to shut it off completely at other times.

It is becoming a matter of resignation that the Council of Industrial Design will select for its various preferences something which is new, as against something which is setablished. The result is that encouragement has been given to some new ideas that have not proved as efficient as those which have stood the test of time. By this I do not infer that no good new ideas for taps have been produced; but if these new ideas are all that superior, why have they not replaced the standard which has been so microscopically examined? In fact, the belief persists that, for the delivery and conservation of water, they are inferior. At conservation of water, they are inferior. At

least one of the companies recently producing them has ceased to exist; and this in a time of unparalleled prosperity in the trade. Nor did anyone wish to purchase their

No, sir, much as we all admire beauty in its proper sphere, and much as we seek to improve it in those products with which we are concerned, experience has shown us that our first duty lies to efficiency and durability and we are not likely to succeed in replacing these qualities with those which your correspondent appears to favour. Unfortunately, provided we agree that the standard fittings are ugly, which we don't, the present design is, whilst thoroughly efficient, incompatible with whatever it is your correspondent is seeking, and which the Council of Industrial Design so avidly encourages, regardless of the consequences.

EDGAR N. HILEY
Secretary
The National Brassfoundry
Association
4 Calthorpe Road
Five Ways
Edgbaston
Birmingham 15

We asked J. Beresford-Evans to comment on these criticisms. Here is his reply:

"Politicians, when they have not a leg to stand on, often use the dialectic device of refuting statements that were not, in fact, made by the other party. Your correspondent, the Secretary of the National Brassfoundry Association, takes me to task in a similar manner; for much of his letter, though revealing and erudite, has little bearing on what I wrote about brassware in relation to ceramic sanitary ware.

"It must be evident that your contributors are giving their personal views, from personal knowledge and observation, rather than reflecting any official policy. For instance I said 'a surprisingly large proportion of the output of the trade is still in a brass finish'. I have this on the authority of one of the most prominent brassfounding firms, but it can also be checked by reference to the books of any ordinary provincial builders' merchant. It is clear that mine is an observer's yiew – not an official one.

"Hospital fittings are no more expensive than 'de luxe' domestic fittings. The truth is that although the best work is often (but not necessarily) found in the more expensive fields, these also contain some of the most inconvenient, pretentious, and downright

"You cannot discuss the beauty of an object unless you define the purpose for which it is to be beautiful; and an appliance must work, and must continue to work efficiently, or it is a shape without purpose. I have a clinical concern with the appearance of products, believing that the appearance is inseparable from other technical considerations. Mr Hiley is not so concerned – he admires beauty in its proper sphere. I had hoped to show that brassware was such a sphere, providing that beauty is not thought of as an added feature but as a product of design – in this case the design of brassware in relation to the ceramic ware with which it may be associated."

The Ninth Annual Report of the Council of Industrial Design stated: "While accepting the claims of many traditional designs that still measure up to today's requirements from the point of view of the user and of the maker, the bias of the Council's propaganda has always been towards encouraging fresh thought and design in both the old craft-based and the new technical industries, whether the inspiration for a good design is original and contemporary or basically traditional."—EDITOR



#### **Brush Group stand**

A reception room designed by F. M. Gross for the Brush Group at the recent 'Public Works and Municipal Services Exhibition'. The blue chairs, yellow sofa, and tables are by Ernest Race and F. M. Gross. The outside curved wall is covered with Primavera a substance made from cotton and straw.

#### Modern in Malaya

The Race furniture with Tygan coverings was particularly admired in the exhibition of which this was part, recently held in Kuala Lumpur. Interest was also shown in the Troughton & Young light fittings and the mosaic tiled floors. Our correspondent Peter Sharp was responsible for the interior design, and he reports that the different colours used for the walls – the left wall is grey, the one directly ahead primrose – elicited surprise and favourable comment from many people in Malaya, who were used to rooms decorated in cream colour.



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Plastics Progress 1953, edited by Phillip Morgan, Iliffe & Sons, 50s The text is based on the papers that were read at the British Plastics Convention in June 1953. They cover several important tranches of plastics technology, and include the letter ideas on selling to the public.

branches of plastics technology, and include the latest ideas on 'selling to the public'. Under this heading Paul Reilly, Deputy Director, CoID, asks who is responsible for design in plastics. One answer, and a bad one, is provided by the American industrial designer who produced a moulded plastic hair based on cheesecake and resin. He ecured 'design' by inviting the twenty-four rettiest models in New York along to his undio, where they sat on a lump of clay hich received a "composite impression of the prettiest backsides in Town".

Mr Reilly suggests three ways in which lefter standards can be introduced. The

gher standards can be introduced. The ppliers of raw material should take more terest in the use to which their produce put. This would cut down the use of aterial for discreditable purposes. There ould be an extension of the moulders' oprietary lines, as the quality of a product safeguarded if the manufacturer puts his me on it. Moreover there is need for sign research by the industry, particularly the matter of decoration which is one of the most difficult problems for the plastics industry.

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The mould designer with a flair for decoration, says Mr Reilly, should observe the comment of Mathew Digby Wyatt, who criticised certain objects at the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851. His warning against "borrowing ornaments expressive of lofty associations and applying them to mean objects" is even more pertinent in the age of plastics than it was in the age of Gothic Revival.

British Plastics Year Book 1954, Iliffe

& Sons Ltd, London, 30s
The 24th edition of the British Plastics Year Book, a classified guide to products and manufacturers in the plastics industry, is now out of print, and the 1955 edition will be published in March.

Furniture for Modern Interiors, Mario dal Fabbro, Reinhold Publishing Corporation, New York; Chapman & Hall, London, 60s How difficult it is to write a constructive

criticism, and all criticism should be con-structive, on a book that drags basically good material down to a meaningless level. The title seems to be the fundamental snag because Mr dal Fabbro has attempted

snag because Mr can raboro has attempted to carry the idea of it through the book, actually showing by means of crude and ugly drawings (printed in navy blue for some reason) pieces of furniture placed together to form parts of rooms. He also shows by means of the same style of drawing pieces of interresticable through and educined shows by means of the same style of drawing pieces of internationally known and admired furniture in elevation, giving a few overall measurements. In addition, there are a few detailed drawings of this furniture which give, on the whole, no useful information as to construction. Quite unobjectionable is a collection of photographs of modern furni-ture from most countries, but unfortunately even these are not chosen with much discrimination.

The short prefaces to the various chapters, cach chapter dealing with one room in the house, are full of trivial and useless information such as: "Every living-room must include comfortable sitting arrangements, well-planned lighting, a few tables, bookshelves and cabinets. Radio and television

sets and record-playing devices also often appear in the living-room." This would only be informative to visitors from another

The subject, I would say, is impossible to write about and illustrate successfully, because the majority of modern furniture surely is produced for modern interiors. As modern interiors differ from each other so vastly, the ways of using furniture in them are endless and can only be suggested in the loosest ways. Above all, little of the furni-ture illustrated can be obtained in this

Country.

This is an uncompromising criticism from the point of view of the designer. Lay-men might find it a useful book which gives an overall picture of modern furniture produced in various parts of the world.

TERENCE CONRAN

The Bohemian Glass, Glassexport and

Jablonec, Czechoslovakia
This is a small, well-illustrated book relating the development of the art of glassmaking in Czechoslovakia. It traces the history of the craft from the first glass actually made in Bohemia two centuries before Christ up to the present day, and covers stained glass, mosaics, early furnace decorated ware, coloured, painted, engraved and cut glass, and modern pressed glass.

In this short but comprehensive survey

one learns of the influence of the Church in the early years, and of the effects of the somewhat unsettled history of the nation upon one of its major industries, and also how, to a certain extent, the life of the country has been shaped by the industry

There are 56 full-page photographs, most of which are illustrations of the historic development. The second section gives examples of modern glass and, finally, there is a small section devoted to Jablonec paste issualless, both bitters and modern. jewellery, both historic and modern.

The book also includes a chronological

table giving the more important dates in the history of the Bohemian glass industry and, at the same time, a brief summary of events in world history. IRENE STEVENS

The Queen's Beasts, illustrated by Eric Bawden and Cecil Keeling, Newman Neame L.td. 8s 6d

It is unfortunately rare these days to find the Shell Organisation sponsoring the modern artist as they did so significantly before the war, but this publication is an exception. It is an admirable example of Edward Bawden's expressive style and the versatility of Cecil Keeling, even if it is difficult to tell their extles need to be a superior of the same of

difficult to tell their styles apart.

The subject of the Queen's ten beasts is not so well known that we can dismiss the not so well known that we can dismiss the text, but the photographic reproductions of the heraldic figures, sculptured for the Coronation and now at Windsor, are reminders of their monochromatic and pompous style. The drawings, admirably reproduced by litho in six colours, are full of wit and brilliance, yet still bearing expressions of loyalty. The design and typography of the book, by John Lewis, are particularly of the book, by John Lewis, are particularly interesting as it is set in Linotype Pilgrim, the face designed by the late Eric Gill and recently made available for machine composition.

Engraving on Wood, John Farleigh, The Dryad Press, Leicester, 6s 6d Lucid, concise and yet meticulously com-

prehensive with regard to correct procedure, this is a perfect basic textbook. The writing has all the precision which one associates with the best in engineering manuals, the diagrams are clear and most helpful. It would be quite impossible, in fact, after reading this book, not to be able to make a wood engraving and to print satisfactorily

The value of the engraving produced, however, depends not only on manual dexterity and the mastery of the various tools but upon the quality of the imaginative mind which creates it. This is a fact which many students fail to recognise, being for ever hopeful that the medium itself will bring some magic to their work to counterbalance a lack of ideas, draughtsmanship or wir. While this is impossible, the medium wir. While this is impossible, the medium wit. While this is impossible, the medium quite frequently acts as a catalyst to the imagination, especially when control over

imagination, especially when control over the craft has been achieved.

Under the heading 'Further Development', Mr Farleigh says "From now on the student may develop in whatever direction his imagination may lead him". A most apt ending to a book of instruction; the invitation to fly. Let us hope that the student readers really do fly, because the English wood-enraying-registerness; is encumbered. wood-engraving-revival-nest is encumbered with wingless ones already. WILLIAM STOWY

#### Books received

Building, the Evolution of an Industry, P. Morton Shand, Token Construction Co Ltd, 158

Contemporary Embroidery Design, Joan Nicholson, B. T. Batsford Ltd, London,

#### Acknowledgment

The photographs on page 24 illustrating 'Brighter waiting-room' were taken by John Furley-Lewis.

#### Design

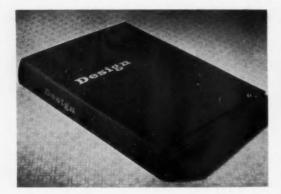
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ARIBA (10, 14). G. H. Chase (50). D. Clark
(47). Eric G. Clements, Des RCA, MSIA (47).
Inn Colquboun, ARIBA, AA Dipl (49). Gillian
Crowther (11). Robin Day, ARCA, FSIA (11).
David Esdaile (10). R. Goodden, RDI,
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(10). F. M. Gross, FSIA, Dip Ing Arch (52).
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Milne, MSIA (11, 13). P. J. Moulding (47).
Robert Nicholson, MSIA (8). Roger Nicholson, ARCA, MSIA (8, 24). Vivien Pilley, MSIA,
FRIBA (24). Ernest Race, RDI, FSIA (8), 52).
John Reid, ARIBA, MSIA (47). Lionel Rider
(11, 14). R. D. Russell, RDI, FSIA (8). F. E.
Ward (10). Cyril Weeden, BSC (Econ), MISIA
(11, 14)

(11, 14)
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